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BY THE AUTHOR OF "FOR PERCIVAL."

CHAPTER XVIII.

DICK'S PROMISE.



forgot him for the moment."

Mrs. Latham touched a few airy notes, you to say that when Rachel comes down," she announced, "We are going to the sea."

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MR. LAURISTON BRETT came in one evening, about a week after Will's arrival. He found his cousin Laura alone, trying over a new song. She turned on the music-stool to greet him. "Dick, you look tired," she said. "And you haven't been here for an age."

"I have been busy." He threw himself into an easy chair. "Is Miss Conway out?"

"No; baby-worshipping upstairs."

"Oh, the boy!" said Dick. "Of course. I

"I would not recommend After another bar or two,

"Where?"

"I don't know." She continued her music. "Scenery not so much an object as absence of precipices. Sands absolutely necessary, as we take spades and little wooden pails."

"When do you go?" said Dick, clasping his hands behind his head.

"Next week, if we can find suitable lodgings at a suitable place. Will is pale." She emphasised the statement with a solemn chord. "So are you," she said, without any accompaniment. "Can't you get away from town for a bit, and come to us in our exile?"

"I don't know whether I could afford a spade," said Dick, doubtfully. "I'll think about it."

"Don't wait for Rachel to invite you," said Laura, still lightly musical. "She might forget."

"You don't like the small boy?"

"On the contrary," Laura replied; "he is rather a nice small boy. His revelations concerning those two old cats, his aunts, are truly delightful, and he has his father's taste for music. Young Oswald brought his violin a day or two since, and Will was enraptured."

"You do like him, then?" said Dick. "That's all right."

"Yes," in a doubtful tone. "But he hinders things rather, and I don't particularly care to go, at a week's notice, to a flat place by the seaside, because Will doesn't eat his breakfast. Rachel proposed that I should remain here, but I don't like breaking up the household in that fashion. However, if they go on to Redlands, I think I shall leave them and pay a round of visits. I can't stand Redlands this summer. Of course there would be no going out."

"Are they going to Redlands?"

"Yes; I believe so. Rachel thinks the boy ought to spend part of every year there. She wants him to learn to love his father's home."

"I should like to see the little man," said Dick, unclasping his hands. "I'm glad she is so fond of him."

"Oh, if that was your desire, it is amply gratified."

"My desire?" he repeated.

"Yes. Didn't you put it into Rachel's head to talk to Adam about him? I consider you responsible for all this."

"Well, that's all right, isn't it?"

"Oh, certainly. Virtue is its own reward," said Laura enigmatically. But after a moment she changed her tone. "Oh Dick, I wish you had a tenth part of the money that Rachel and Will have! Then you needn't work so hard."

"But I haven't," said Dick. "Their money is nothing to me. Don't you think my own will be better—when I make it?" He spoke quickly, as if to banish an importunate idea, and, springing up, began to turn over a pile of music. "Here are some of my songs," he said; "you haven't played for me for weeks." And he set one up in front of her.

From one they went on to another. Dick had just finished "Hybrias the Cretan," in his biggest voice, when the door opened and Miss Conway came in. He hastened to greet her, and in the same breath assured her that she had missed a treat.

"What, your song? Oh, no; I heard it all. I was waiting just outside."

Dick looked doubtful. "Is that a compliment or not? It speaks well for the power of my voice; but still, that you should prefer me modified by a door—"

Rachel smiled, turning aside to the fireplace.

"I was afraid such a burst of melody might wake Will. No, no you haven't done any harm," she said, in answer to his look of dismay.

"We were talking about him." And Dick came from the piano. "I want to see him. I must come some day; you know we are old friends, Will and I."

"Yes; I know. You were the first person who ever really told me about him." She hesitated a moment. "Would you like to come and see him now?"

"May I?"

"Yes; if you won't sing 'Hybrias the Cretan' over him!"

Dick followed her out of the room and up the stairs, past a great moonlit window where masses of white cloud drifted by like ghostly ships. Miss Conway paused for an instant at a door, turned the handle softly, and ushered him in. There were soft white curtains, a shaded light, something of warmth and sweetness in the air, and in his dainty nest lay Will asleep, with a small hand half-closed upon the coverlet. Dick felt as if he had come to some sacred secret shrine, and held his breath, looking down at the delicate cheek and long lashes. Rachel put back a lock of hair which had strayed across the boy's forehead, and Dick, seeing that he was not disturbed by her touch, stooped down and laid his lips softly on the little hand.

"A week yesterday since he came," said Miss Conway, "but it seems to me as if it must be more. Isn't he beautiful?"

"Yes," Dick answered in a whisper.

"Is he like that picture at Redlands?"

He nodded. "Only the picture is rather fairer."

Rachel sighed. "If I may but keep him!"

He looked up in surprise. "Keep him? Who's going to take him away? Lauriston has made that safe enough; nobody will upset his will, you may be very sure of that."

"Yes; but suppose he were to die!"

The young fellow drew his breath sharply. But in a moment he recovered himself. "But why should he? I don't see why he should. A good many children live, you know. I've seen them about!" He whispered his whimsical consolation with the utmost discretion, and Rachel answered with a smile.

At that moment the nurse appeared at the open door, and asked a question of her young mistress, who went, with a word of excuse, to speak to her in the passage. Dick, looking round, saw an open book lying on a chair beside him, and took it up. It was a volume of French poetry, and on its flyleaf was pencilled, "Adam Lauriston." Dick turned the leaves as he stood, and read bits here and there. Old legends lived in those pages, strange shapes flitted across them, they held the wild cries of beasts and of hurrying winds, and the stormy rush of rain. There were tropical flowers, and the foam of wintry seas, and the fierce loneliness of deserts under the arching heavens. There were visions of ruined worlds, of suns and wandering stars, and a human voice ringing strangely and drearily in void places, telling of regret, of agony, of defiance, of endurance. It was a curious transition to turn from all these immensities and eternities to the warm, hushed room, and Will's little head upon the pillow.

Rachel came back and stood on the further side of the bed. "Ah!" she said, with grave calmness, glancing at the book in Dick's hand, "did you see whose that was? He brought it to me almost the last time he was here; it was a favourite book of his."

"I saw his name in it," said young Brett. She looked down at the boy, and he gazed at her, a tall slight figure against the white curtain folds, bending her head a little with tender intentness. For the poet there might be the infinite space of night and thought around them; but for Rachel there was nothing beyond that little bed, and the breath that came and went so softly on those childish lips. She smiled a little at first, and then her thoughts swung back to the point they had quitted a little while before, and she looked up and met the young man's eyes.

"If ever you have Redlands—" she began.

He started and drew back. "You'll hate me! God grant I mayn't!"

"Hate you!" she repeated softly; "no; I should have no right to hate you. But I would never see you again—I could not bear it—I would go to the other end of the world to avoid you. Hate you—no! It would not be your fault. I would pray that you might be happy—very happy—and that I might die like the boy!"

"God help me!" Dick answered. "I don't want Redlands. If you could look into my heart, you would know that this is true." He hardly spoke above a whisper; but Will stirred a little on his pillow, as if some breath of the intenser life above his head, with its passionate utterances and its foreshadowings of possible sorrow, ruffled his sweet tranquillity. Rachel paused with a hand slightly lifted, and the little sleeper sank back into repose. It was she who broke the silence.

"Dick," she said, with her eyes fixed on the child, "you told me that day at the 'Falcon' that if at any time I wanted help—"

"I'm ready," said Dick, his prompt fervour carefully conveyed in a subdued voice. "What can I do?"

"You can give me exactly what I refused that day—a promise."

"What is it?"

"Your cousin made me a promise once, but the time to redeem it didn't come; I trust it never will come."

"So far as I can take his place——"

Still looking downward, she smiled and shook her head. "No, she said; "I don't want that promise renewed. I want you to make me a different one with little Will for witness. That is why I ask you here and now."

"Tell me," said Dick.

"You know what I am afraid of, what keeps me apart from every one. Everybody knows, don't they? And you talked about me with him."

"I know."

"Well, if ever I am mad—if you see the least sign of it—promise me that you will take Will away from me. You are his guardian, too, you know. If you have the smallest doubt you must do it. Get me locked up somewhere—shut up behind all the bolts and bars in the world. Never mind where, if only I can't get out. I might frighten the boy—you don't know what harm it does to frighten a child. Even if I loved him I might do it, and he might never know I loved him. Promise," she said in a voice which was all the more intense, because she never for one moment raised it above the soft level tone in which she had begun to speak over the unconscious child.

"Promise to take the boy away—to shut you up—nonsense!" said Dick. "Shut you up in—in—— Not I!"

"See here," she said quite calmly. "There's but one thing in the whole world that a man could do to give me any happiness, and that is to make me this promise, so that I may live my life in peace. And you are the one man I can ask to do it. And I do ask you!"

"Oh, for God's sake don't talk like that! And I couldn't if I would!"

"Oh, yes, you could. I'm sure you could. They always say it's only too easy to get anybody into a madhouse——"

"You in a madhouse! Oh, God!"

"I don't believe there'll be any need. If I did I should doubt my right to have Will now. But if there should be, I must know that at the first hint of danger I may trust to you to save the boy without a thought of me."

He was silent, gazing at her.

Suddenly her eyes lighted up. "Promise!" she said. "Your hand upon it, Dick! You shall!"

Their cold hands met and clasped across little Will, who was far away in some small paradise of dreams. "You are bound," said Rachel, as her fingers relaxed their hold.

Dick, with a groan, turned away his head, and stole softly out of the

room. But the moment he was out of hearing he ran downstairs, and went straight out of the house into the moonlit night. Rachel, lingering, with a contented smile, drew the sheet about the little sleeper's throat, and stooped to pick up the book which young Brett had let fall. She looked at the flyleaf with its pencilled name. "Take your place!" she said to herself. "No!"

CHAPTER XIX.

NEWS OF THE EASTWOODS.

RACHEL could laugh a little at her devotion to Will, which for that very reason was the more certainly unchangeable, since those who laugh at their own enthusiasms can hardly be laughed out of them. Her thoughts had fastened on the boy at first in idle curiosity; her desire to have him had been a whim, a fancy eager enough, yet which might have lighted elsewhere. Mr. Lauriston had understood her when he smiled and shrugged his shoulders, and said, "If it amuses you!" With the tidings of her guardianship came a deeper sense of earnestness and responsibility, but still she was conscious of herself, and felt that Will belonged to her. But with Will's first look and touch came the revelation of his individuality. He could not be moulded to any fancy of hers. The boy, though delicate, was yet too healthy to be sentimental; he would not pose in becoming attitudes; he was shrewd and sharp-eyed, quick to take an advantage; he would not even consent to be petted, unless it happened to please him at the moment. He was affectionate; yet his very demonstrations of love were not tender, but had a spice of something piquant and salt in them. Over and over again, Rachel's first fancy of Cupid recurred to her, and she detected in Will the wayward hardness of the little, laughing god. He could not be her toy, and she loved him all the better for the certainty.

It was true that his first offer of affection had been prompt and spontaneous enough. As they came up to town from Aldermere, Will, after amusing himself in every possible way in the railway carriage, settled down in the seat opposite her, and looked at her obliquely, while feigning to be absorbed in the landscape. Presently he spoke.

"There was a housemaid once I used to love, only she went away last November. She went away on Guy Fawkes' Day. She wasn't my nurse, she was the housemaid. Should you like me to love you?"

Rachel, smiling, yet wistful, answered "Do."

Will, looking round, seemed suddenly struck with the fact that the present was an unoccupied time. "I'll love you now!" he exclaimed. And forthwith he flung himself upon her, threw his arms about her neck, and rained a shower of fierce, hard, little kisses on her face. The little, clinging arms wound closely round her throat, little lips kissing

hurriedly, little knees pounding her lap in eager restlessness, filled Rachel with a thousand new sensations. From that embrace she emerged, flushed, dishevelled, laughing, with her eyes full of loving gladness and a new hope in her heart. She felt as if she had been suffered to pour her life from off its bitter, turbid ices, into the golden cup of Will's future, and might throw the dregs away. As for Will himself, he scrambled back to his seat, and sat, out of breath, surveying the ruin he had wrought. His thoughts returned to the housemaid. "I loved her sometimes till her cap came right off," he said.

Mrs. Latham had foretold that Dick would receive no further invitation to join them at the seaside, and, when the event falsified her prediction, she laughingly declared that Rachel was afraid Will might be dull without company. In truth, however, Miss Conway was eager to show her gratitude to Dick for the promise she had exacted from him, and to put their friendship once more on its old footing of frankness and ease. The young fellow discovered that his work would permit him to take a few days' holiday, and he made his appearance at Salthaven as soon as they were comfortably settled.

The watering-place which Rachel had finally selected was flat, undoubtedly. Mrs. Latham, with perfect good humour, sat indoors with her back to the window, writing sprightly descriptions of its flatness to her numerous correspondents. Outside there was a pearly clearness, a grey gleaming sky, and a silver tide flowing softly over wide reaches of wet brown sand. A jetty ran out from the shore, the sharp skeleton outlines of its black timbers softened at the seaward end with weeds of olive and green, which rose and fell upon the waves. There were tarred boats resting idly on the beach, and fishermen disentangling long ropes of brown nets. Looking towards the land, the green meadows rose in a hardly perceptible slope from the road which marked the termination of the sands, which at their highest line were seldom covered, and were overgrown with grey sea holly and yellow poppies. The crescents and terraces of the watering-place clustered about a pretentious little spire, but, further inland, windmills caught the gleaming light on their labouring sails, and a grey church-tower and the stacks and roof of a distant farm rose against the sky.

The lodging-house keepers considered the season hardly begun, but already there was a sprinkling of visitors on the jetty and parade, and a baby corps of sappers and miners on the sands. Will, in rough blue serge, and with white feet bare, a busy little speck on the wide brown expanse, fortified the shore against the tide, which at that particular moment was ebbing peacefully in the distance. Rachel, a few yards higher up, where the sand was drier, read her book or gazed dreamily seaward "over the level floor of the flood," and was conscious of the active little limping figure all the time.

After a little while, however, Will ceased his solitary toil, his attention being attracted by a gentleman who had appeared near Miss Conway

with a tiny, two-year-old, pink and white little maid clinging to his hand. The gentleman tucked his stick and his penny paper under his arm, and with his disengaged hand began to dig for his daughter's diversion. Her spade, however, was hardly bigger than a good-sized spoon, and Will, standing by with an air of superiority, could not restrain his contempt for such an implement. "That's a very little spade," he said half to himself.

"So it is," said the gentleman, lifting a handsome good-humoured face, a little burnt by the sun, and flushed with stooping. "Suppose you lend me yours for a minute."

The boy, somewhat taken by surprise, hesitated as he resigned it, but his new friend took it mechanically, gazing beyond him. His colour deepened suddenly. Rachel had risen and was looking at him with startled eyes.

It was an embarrassing moment, as moments are apt to be when customs and codes of manners fail, and feelings are confused. They were not enemies—it was absurd to suppose it—but might they meet as friends? Eastwood's glance questioned Rachel, Rachel's questioned Eastwood. They had parted, in grief on her side too hopelessly sad for tears, and on his side in a passion of jealous anger which could only have been quenched in blood. Nothing had come of it all except that they met thus, five years later, in charge of small children on the sands, with no deeper feelings than a bashful goodwill, and a rather awkward remembrance.

Eastwood dropped Will's spade and went forward, lifting his hat. "How do you do?" he said, taking the hand which Rachel held out to him. "I didn't know you were staying here."

"We came four days ago," she replied. "It seems a nice place, I think."

"Oh, very nice, very nice indeed," said Charley with a hurried readiness of assent. "Very dull, though," he added, recollecting himself. "Nothing on earth to do."

"And how are all your people?" Rachel inquired, tripping up his last word with the question, as if a moment's delay might be attended with fatal consequences.

"Oh, they're very well, thank you. That is, my mother isn't quite as young as she used to be, you know. And Bessy wasn't quite the thing, that's why we came down here; but she's better for the change, I hope."

"I'm very glad to hear it." By this time the two had contrived to look at each other. Charley's impression, based partly on her shyness, was that Rachel was very little changed. Rachel was struck with the fact that Charley was handsomer than she expected to see him, with a kind of solid regularity of feature. There was more flesh than of old; he was sleek, prosperous, well-fed, well-brushed, healthy, kindly, and self-satisfied, and yet at the same time he had the keen look of a man of business. He was a capital specimen of the type; but Rachel felt as if she

had seen a great many of him. A curious sense of dreariness stole over her soul, and saddened sea and sky. It was impossible to believe in that early love, impossible to believe even in the pain of that hour of parting. Rachel was lonely with that uttermost loneliness when the past wears an alien face. She looked at Charley's smiling lips, and remembered that he had kissed her in the garden long ago. Instinctively she drew back a little—as if it were possible to withdraw from contact with a memory!

The next moment she was asking him questions about his little girl, with a desire to atone for the feeling of repulsion which she had not been able to overcome. Eastwood could not suspect it. To him a bygone kiss was simply a bygone kiss, one among many, to be recalled vaguely with a broadening smile, as one might recall summer days or glasses of good wine. He stooped with a pleasant look in his eyes to arrange little Muriel's pink silk handkerchief, and with a large forefinger touched the baby cheeks above it, pink, too, like the little bindweed blossoms that grow in the corn. "Time goes fast, doesn't it?" he said, looking admiringly downward. "Will Muriel kiss the lady?" But Muriel declined to make friends, even when lifted to the safe eminence of dada's arms. She repulsed Rachel with tiny hands, in spite of his tender reproaches, "Oh, Muriel! Naughty—naughty!" Muriel only laughed, and put a little cotton-gloved finger in his mouth, till Eastwood, with a hurried "Excuse me—I'll be back in a minute," strode across the sands, and handed her over to the nurse who was in charge of her baby brother.

Returning with a smile on his face, and his fair beard glistening in a pale gleam of sunshine, he encountered Will, who was just setting off to resume his digging. Charley laid his hands on the boy's shoulders. "And who may this little man be?" he asked in his strong, mellow voice. But even as he said the words Will looked up at him with a swift glance, and a slight arching of his dark, delicate brows. "By Jove!" said Eastwood, "it's Lauriston's boy!"

"Yes," said Rachel. "He lives with me, don't you, Will?"

Will nodded. "But when I'm a man I shall have my papa's big house to live in," he explained.

"Of course you will," said Charley. "And a very nice house it is. But that won't be just yet, you know."

"It won't be so very long," Will replied. "I'm bigger than I used to be. And when I'm grown up," he went on with a confident expectation of sympathy which he had learned from Rachel, "I shall be a highwayman. I shan't ever be a missionary—I like highwaymen best, don't you?"

"This is moral!" said Charley. "Well, between you and me, my boy, I don't like either of 'em. I like the people who put money into my pockets, not the folks who come with a plate or a pistol to take it out."

"I won't take yours," Will assured him. "I won't ever take yours. But I shall be a highwayman and have a black horse."

"And the police after you. I wouldn't," said Eastwood. "They'll make a magistrate of you one of these days. The magistrate has the best of it. You should always mind and get hold of the right end of the stick."

Will looked doubtfully at him, and then went back to his fortifications, reserving a few questions concerning the habits and privileges of magistrates for Rachel's ear on some future occasion.

"Nice little fellow, but queer, isn't he?" said Charley, looking after him. "Takes after his father in that. I saw poor Lauriston's death in the papers. Terribly sudden, but I suppose he knew it was likely to be sudden, poor fellow."

"Yes," said Rachel hurriedly. That Charley should stand there talking about Adam Lauriston was unendurable. "Tell me about your sisters, she exclaimed abruptly. "They are both married, are they not?"

"Both—yes. Fanny's done very well for herself, very well indeed. Pemberton is the sort of man to make his way. He'll be keeping his carriage one of these days, and it won't be so very long first, I tell him."

"And Effie?"

"Well, Effie's made rather a mess of it, I'm afraid, poor girl!" Charley replied in a tone of genuine regret. "Not a bad sort of fellow—in an office he was, with a fair salary and the prospect of a rise. Used to do a bit of writing in the evenings, poetry, and that sort of thing. No harm in that, you know, after business hours."

"No, certainly not," said Rachel, entirely assenting to his liberal views.

"Had a little money of his own, though only a little. It was providential that he had, for he's blind now, poor fellow, and has had to give up his situation. They waited for him as long as they could, they thought so highly of him; but of course business is business, and a blind man's no good. They couldn't wait for ever."

"But is he hopelessly blind?"

"I'm afraid so. Effie won't believe it, but I doubt there's no chance."

"Then how do they live?"

"Well," said Charley, drawing lines on the sand with his stick, "there's that little of his own, and he writes a bit—at least Effie writes for him. They take his stories now and then in some magazine or other. And Fanny sends Effie things, sometimes. So does Bessy, and mother—we—we all do a little to help."

"I know *you* do," said Rachel, with so frank and eloquent a glance that it sent a ten-pound note that very evening to Effie. "She was always your favourite, wasn't she? Poor Effie! Give me her address, please; she will let me go and see her, won't she?"

"Oh, yes, she'll be delighted," said Charley. He had forgotten Effie's enthusiastic partisanship, and the pleading question seemed unnecessary. "And I should like you to see Fanny's house; it's really uncommonly nice. Maida Vale way she lives."

"And you?" said Rachel. "You are doing well; you are getting on?"

He nodded. "I've nothing to complain of. My business increases every year. I've a nice home, and I've got the best of wives." (Charley said it with a certain defiance, and a consciousness that it would sound very well when he went home to Bessy, and described the interview with his former love.) "I don't know what I could wish for more."

"I'm very glad," she murmured.

"They call me Lucky Eastwood, sometimes," he went on. "And certainly I have had one or two curious bits of luck—things coming in my way that I couldn't have expected. But I may say this—I've made the most of them. Chance is all very well; but the question is, I fancy, what use a man makes of his chances."

Rachel assented.

"I wish you could have seen Bessy," said Charley. "But, you see, we are leaving to-morrow morning, and she and Minnie (that's her sister) are packing up. It's a regular mess, you know, with the children's things and all; I don't like to ask you. They were glad to get rid of me, I know."

Rachel promised to call on Mrs. Charles Eastwood at a more convenient season.

"You're very little changed!" said Eastwood abruptly. He stood looking at her with old reminiscences waking in his glance. After all, mad though it was, she *had* meant what she had said. She had not married Lauriston. He believed now that she would never marry. She would have married him—Eastwood—if things had been different, poor girl! And, with all his fidelity to his incomparable Bessy, Charley felt himself the hero of a mournful romance, and looked very kindly at the heroine.

"Am I not changed? I feel changed," said Rachel, laughing a little nervously, and again half inclined to step back.

At this moment Dick arrived, lounging across the sands from the water's edge. He was dressed in light grey, which somehow seemed curiously different from Charley's tourist suit, and he had no penny paper. His hands were full of shells and bits of pebble and weed. Rachel introduced him as Mr. Lauriston Brett, and he calmly pressed upon her three cockleshells, and a piece of wood covered with barnacles, that he might have one hand free. Eastwood was a little perplexed when the new-comer began to talk in his easy fashion. In Dick's manner to Miss Conway there was a mixture of reverence and familiarity which the other could by no means understand.

"Why, what is Will doing?" said Rachel after a few minutes.

Dick, who was halfway through a sentence, went away to look, and, returning, announced placidly that Will was trying to cut up a starfish.

"To cut up a starfish! Oh, go and stop him! How cruel of him! How cruel of you to let him!"

Dick shrugged his shoulders. "I don't think he can manage it," he said as he moved off. "And very likely it's dead. And, anyhow, how can you expect a six-year-old imagination to enter into the feelings of a starfish when it's being cut up with a wooden spade?"

Returning again he brought information that the starfish was certainly dead. "In fact," said Dick, "the—the news is a trifle stale. Will is going to bury it in a grave lined with red seaweed."

Eastwood was asking Rachel where she lodged. He received a slight but unmistakable shock of unexpectedness when she named Sea View House, the best lodgings in the place. He had not yet fitted Rachel in his mind to her changed surroundings. "We are at No. 2, Marine Villas, the turning after you pass the church," he said. "Nice little houses. Our names are in the Visitors' List—you didn't notice them?"

"I don't often look at a Visitors' List," Miss Conway replied. "If I do find any people I should like to see, they always went away last week and left their names lingering behind them."

"Well, I like to read the list through; one never knows who may be there." And Charley pulled a little badly-printed paper out of his pocket. "Look," he said, unfolding the *Salthaven Advertiser*, "there we are." And there sure enough were "Mr. and Mrs. Charles Eastwood and family, and Miss Watson." Dick looked over his shoulder as he pointed.

"But you didn't find us, you see," said Rachel. "Though, to be sure, I didn't send our names, so perhaps it wasn't likely."

"I should have thought the people of the house would put them in. Sea View House—hullo! 'Mrs. and Master Latham, and Miss Conroy.' I suppose that means you?"

"Well, I call that very good for a Visitors' List," Rachel persisted. "Oh, now what is Will doing? Is he quarrelling with that small boy?"

Dick departed again, and the other two looked after him. "A relation of Lauriston's, I suppose, by his name?" said Eastwood.

"A cousin," she answered. The small boy fled at Dick's approach, Will was detained, there was a prolonged discussion, and finally Will went towards the water, evidently seeking something, while Dick stood like a pensive sentinel, immovably fixed, and gazing out to sea.

"The boy isn't so very lame after all," said Charley, watching the little figure with its slight unevenness of gait. "This is a capital place for children, certainly; but I must say for my part I like something a little livelier. What did you do with yourself the day before yesterday, when it poured, off and on, the whole afternoon? I thought I should have yawned the top of my head off, by Jove!"

"Oh, but it was such a beautiful afternoon," Rachel replied abstractedly, following Will with her eyes. "There were such lovely gleams of sunlight on the sea between the storms. I sat by the window,

and watched them. I saw a whole rainbow and three bits, and the clouds were so fine!"

Eastwood surveyed her with compassionate amazement. "You are not a bit changed—not a bit. I can fancy you looking at the sea all day. 'What are the wild waves saying?'—that's the sort of thing you like, eh? So does Minnie; she was quoting it only this morning. I should think you'd get on with Minnie—I never saw such a girl for poetry. But that isn't my line, you know." And Charley smiled, feeling that his yawns proved him something of a martyr, suffering for the possession of superior common sense. "I dare say it's all very beautiful; but I must own I like something livelier." And with that he looked at the time, found it later than he expected, and rather hurriedly took his leave, with a beaming expression of his hope that they might meet before long in town.

Young Brett strolled back almost immediately. "That small boy was a marauder," he said. "While Will was digging the grave he came and stole the starfish, and when he was charged with the theft he declared that he picked it up over there." Dick pointed to the ocean generally. "It was a lie, I know, but I didn't pursue him to tell him so. It wasn't my business to look after his morals; I suppose he has a nursemaid or somebody to do that. I suggested to Will that I would take care of the grave, while he went and looked up something else in the way of a corpse. He came back, quite happy, with some miscellaneous remains of crab, so now the funeral is going on."

Rachel smiled. "You are very good to Will."

"Am I? I say, that man's name was Eastwood?"

"Yes."

"An accountant?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Oh, nothing," said Dick. "Only he's a man Lauriston knew something of, isn't he? I remember hearing him speak of him."

A sense of loyalty and justice to Charley, a feeling that for the sake of old times she must defend him even from a dead man's scorn, prompted Rachel's reply. "Yes, that's the man," she said. "But—but you must make some allowance—Mr. Lauriston was inclined to be a little hard on Mr. Eastwood—you see the two were so unlike that they never could really understand each other. If you only knew it, there is really a great deal of good——"

"But that isn't the man, then!" said Dick amazed. "I meant an Eastwood he was interested in. He took a good deal of pains to put some business in his hands once or twice. I happened to be with him at the time."

The colour rushed to Rachel's cheeks and her eyes filled. "Oh!" she said, "shall I never know him—never be just to him?" She caught one hand with the other, and pressed it almost as if it were not her own. "Dick, that *is* the man!"

Miss Edgeworth.

PART II.

LATER TIMES.

VIII.

"CALAIS after a rough passage ; Brussels, flat country, tiled houses, "trees and ditches, the window shutters turned out to the street ; fish- "wives' legs, Dunkirk, and the people looking like wooden toys set in "motion ; Bruges and its mingled spires, shipping, and windmills." These notes of travel read as if Miss Edgeworth had been writing down only yesterday a pleasant list of the things which are to be seen two hours off, to-day no less plainly than a century ago. She jots it all down from her corner in the post-chaise, where she is propped up with a father, brother, stepmother, and sister for travelling companions, and a new book to beguile the way. She is charmed with her new book. It is the story of *Mademoiselle de Clermont*, by Madame de Genlis, which is just out. The Edgeworths (with many other English people) rejoiced in the long-looked-for millennium, which had been signed only the previous autumn, and they now came abroad to bask in the sunshine of the Continent, which had been so long denied to our mist-bound islanders. We hear of the enthusiastic and somewhat premature joy with which this peace was received by all ranks of people. Not only did the English rush over to France ; foreigners crossed to England, and one of them, an old friend of Mr. Edgeworth's, reached Edgeworthtown, and filled its enterprising master with a desire to see those places and things once more which he heard described. Mr. Edgeworth was anxious also to show his young wife the treasures in the Louvre, and to help her to develop her taste for art. He had had many troubles of late, lost friends and children by death and by marriage. One can imagine that the change must have been welcome to them all. Besides Maria and Lovell, his eldest son, he took with him a lovely young girl, Charlotte Edgeworth, a daughter of Elizabeth Sneyd. They travelled by Belgium, stopping on their way at Bruges, at Ghent, and visiting pictures and churches along the road, as travellers still like to do. Mrs. Edgeworth was, as we have said, the artistic member of the party. We do not know what modern rhapsodists would say to Miss Edgeworth's very subdued criticisms and descriptions of feeling on this occasion. "It is extremely agreeable to me," she writes, "to see paintings with those who have excellent taste and no affectation." And this remark might perhaps be thought even more to the point now than in the pre-aesthetic age in which it was

innocently made. The travellers are finally landed in Paris in a magnificent hotel in a fine square, "formerly Place Louis-Quinze, afterwards Place de la Révolution, now Place de la Concorde." And Place de la Concorde it remains, wars and revolutions notwithstanding, whether lighted by the flames of the desperate Commune or by the peaceful sunsets which stream their evening glory across the blood-stained stones.

The Edgeworths did not come as strangers to Paris; they brought letters and introductions with them, and bygone associations and friendships which had only now to be resumed. The well-known Abbé Morellet, their old acquaintance, "answered for them," says Miss Edgeworth, and besides all this Mr. Edgeworth's name was well known in scientific circles. Bréguet, Montgolfier, and others all made him welcome. Lord Henry Petty, as Maria's friend Lord Lansdowne was then called, was in Paris, and Rogers the poet, and Kosciusko, cured of his wounds. For the first time they now made the acquaintance of M. Dumont, a lifelong friend and correspondent. There were many others—the Delesserts, of the French Protestant faction, Madame Suard, to whom the romantic Thomas Day had paid court some thirty years before, and Madame Campan, and Madame Récamier, and Madame de Rémusat, and Madame de Houdetot, now seventy-two years of age, but Rousseau's Julie still, and Camille Jordan, and the Chevalier Edelcrantz, from the Court of the King of Sweden.

The names alone of the Edgeworths' entertainers represent a delightful and interesting section of the history of the time. One can imagine that besides all these pleasant and talkative persons the Faubourg Saint-Germain itself threw open its great swinging doors to the relations of the Abbé Edgeworth who risked his life to stand by his master upon the scaffold and to speak those noble warm-hearted words, the last that Louis ever heard. One can picture the family party as it must have appeared with its pleasant British looks—the agreeable "ruddy-faced" father, the gentle Mrs. Edgeworth, who is somewhere described by her stepdaughter as so orderly, so clean, so freshly dressed, and the child of fifteen, only too beautiful and delicately lovely, and last of all Maria herself, the nice little unassuming, Jeannie Deans-looking body Lord Byron described, small, homely, perhaps, but with her gift of French, of charming intercourse, her fresh laurels of authorship (for *Belinda* was lately published), her bright animation, her cultivated mind and power of interesting all those in her company, to say nothing of her own kindling interest in every one and everything round about her.

Her keen delights and vivid descriptions of all these new things, faces, voices, ideas, are all to be read in some long and most charming letters to Ireland, which also contain the account of a most eventful crisis which this Paris journey brought about. The letter is dated March 1803, and it concludes as follows:—

Here, my dear aunt, I was interrupted in a manner that will surprise you as much as it surprised me—by the coming of M. Edelcrantz, a Swedish gentleman whom we

have mentioned to you, of superior understanding and mild manners. He came to offer me his hand and heart! My heart, you may suppose, cannot return his attachment, for I have seen but very little of him, and have not had time to have formed any judgment except that I think nothing could tempt me to leave my own dear friends and my own country to live in Sweden.

Maria Edgeworth was now about thirty years of age, at a time of life when people are apt to realise perhaps almost more deeply than in early youth the influence of feeling, its importance, and strange power over events. Hitherto there are no records in her memoirs of any sentimental episodes, but it does not follow that a young lady has not had her own phase of experience because she does not write it out at length to her various aunts and correspondents. Miss Edgeworth was not a sentimental person. She was warmly devoted to her own family, and she seems to have had a strong idea of her own want of beauty; perhaps her admiration for her lovely young sisters may have caused this feeling to be exaggerated by her. But no romantic, lovely heroine could have inspired a deeper or more touching admiration than this one which M. Edelcrantz felt for his English friend; the mild and superior Swede seems to have been thoroughly in earnest.

So indeed was Miss Edgeworth, but she was not carried away by the natural impulse of the moment. She realised the many difficulties and dangers of the unknown; she looked to the future; she turned to her own home, and with an affection all the more felt because of the trial to which it was now exposed. The many lessons of self-control and self-restraint which she had learnt returned with instinctive force. Sometimes it happens that people miss what is perhaps the best for the sake of the next best, and we see convenience and old habit and expediency, and a hundred small and insignificant circumstances, gathering like some avalanche to divide hearts that might give and receive very much from each. But sentiment is not the only thing in life. Other duties, ties, and realities there are; and it is difficult to judge for others in such matters. Sincerity of heart and truth to themselves are pretty sure in the end to lead people in the right direction for their own and for other people's happiness. Only, in the experience of many women there is the danger that fixed ideas, and other people's opinion, and the force of custom may limit lives which might have been complete in greater things, though perhaps less perfect in the lesser. People in the abstract are sincere enough in wishing fulness of experience and of happiness to those dearest and nearest to them; but we are only human beings, and when the time comes and the horrible necessity for parting approaches, our courage goes, our hearts fail, and we think we are preaching reason and good sense while it is only a most natural instinct which leads us to cling to that to which we are used and to those we love.

Mr. Edgeworth did not attempt to influence Maria. Mrs. Edgeworth evidently had some misgivings, and certainly much sympathy for the Chevalier and for her friend and stepdaughter. She says:—

Maria was mistaken as to her own feelings. She refused M. Edelcrantz, but she felt much more for him than esteem and admiration ; she was extremely in love with him. Mr. Edgeworth left her to decide for herself ; but she saw too plainly what it would be to us to lose her and what she would feel at parting with us. She decided rightly for her own future happiness and for that of her family, but she suffered much at the time and long afterwards. While we were at Paris I remember that in a shop, where Charlotte and I were making purchases, Maria sat apart absorbed in thought, and so deep in reverie that when her father came in and stood opposite to her she did not see him till he spoke to her, when she started and burst into tears. . . . I do not think she repented of her refusal or regretted her decision. She was well aware that she could not have made M. Edelcrantz happy, that she would not have suited his position at the Court of Stockholm, and that her want of beauty might have diminished his attachment. It was perhaps better she should think so, for it calmed her mind ; but from what I saw of M. Edelcrantz I think he was a man capable of really valuing her. I believe he was much attached to her, and deeply mortified at her refusal. He continued to reside in Sweden after the abdication of his master, and was always distinguished for his high character and great abilities. He never married. He was except for his very fine eyes, remarkably plain.

So ends the romance of the romancer. There are, however, many happinesses in life, as there are many troubles.

Mrs. Edgeworth tells us that after her stepdaughter's return to Edgeworthtown she occupied herself with various literary works, correcting some of her former MSS. for the press, and writing *Madame de Fleury*, *Emilie de Coulanges*, and *Leonora*. But the high-flown and romantic style did suit her gift, and she wrote best when her genuine interest and unaffected glances shone with bright understanding sympathy upon her immediate surroundings. When we are told that *Leonora* was written in the style the Chevalier Edelcrantz preferred, and that the idea of what he would think of it was present to Maria in every page, we begin to realise that for us at all events it was a most fortunate thing that she decided as she did. It would have been a loss indeed to the world if this kindling and delightful spirit of hers had been choked by the polite thorns, fictions, and platitudes of an artificial, courtly life and by the well-ordered narrowness of a limited standard. She never heard what the Chevalier thought of the book ; she never knew that he ever read it even. It is a satisfaction to hear that he married no one else, and while she sat writing and not forgetting in the pleasant library at home, one can imagine the romantic Chevalier in his distant Court faithful to the sudden and romantic devotion by which he is now remembered. Romantic and chivalrous friendship seems to belong to his country and to his countrymen.

IX.

There are one or two other episodes less sentimental than this one recorded of this visit to Paris, not the least interesting of these being the account given of a call upon Madame de Genlis. The younger author from her own standpoint having resolutely turned away from the voice of

the charmer for the sake of that which she is convinced to be duty and good sense, now somewhat sternly takes the measure of her elder sister, who has failed in the struggle, who is alone and friendless, and who has made her fate.

The story is too long to quote at full length. An isolated page without its setting loses very much; the previous description of the darkness and uncertainty through which Maria and her father go wandering, and asking their way in vain, adds immensely to the sense of the gloom and isolation which hides the close of a long and brilliant career. At last the travellers compel a reluctant porter to show them the staircase in the Arsenal, where Madame de Genlis is living, and to point out the door before he goes off with the light.

They wait in darkness for the door to be opened.

After ringing this bell we presently heard doors open and little footsteps approaching nigh. The door was opened by a girl of about Honora's size, holding an ill set-up, wavering candle in her hand, the light of which fell full upon her face and figure. Her face was remarkably intelligent—dark sparkling eyes, dark hair curled in the most fashionable long corkscrew ringlets over her eyes and cheeks. She parted the ringlets to take a full view of us. The dress of her figure by no means suited the head and elegance of her attitude. What her nether weeds might be we could not distinctly see, but they seemed a coarse short petticoat like what Molly Bristow's children would wear. After surveying us and hearing our name was Edgeworth she smiled graciously and bid us follow her, saying, "Maman est chez elle." She led the way with the grace of a young lady who has been taught to dance across two antechambers, miserable-looking; but, miserable or not, no home in Paris can be without them. The girl, or young lady, for we were still in doubt which to think her, led into a small room in which the candles were so well screened by a green tin screen that we could scarcely distinguish the tall form of a lady in black who rose from her chair by the fireside; as the door opened a great puff of smoke came from the huge fireplace at the same moment. She came forward, and we made our way towards her as well as we could through a confusion of tables, chairs, and work-baskets, china, writing-desks and inkstands, and birdeages, and a harp. She did not speak, and as her back was now turned to both fire and candle I could not see her face or anything but the outline of her form and her attitude. Her form was the remains of a fine form, her attitude that of a woman used to a better drawing-room.

I being foremost, and she silent, was compelled to speak to the figure in darkness. "Madame de Genlis nous a fait l'honneur de nous mander qu'elle voulait bien nous permettre de lui rendre visite," said I, or words to that effect, to which she replied by taking my hand and saying something in which "charmée" was the most intelligible word. While she spoke she looked over my shoulder at my father, whose bow, I presume, told her he was a gentleman, for she spoke to him immediately as if she wished to please and seated us in *fauteuils* near the fire.

I then had a full view of her face—figure very thin and melancholy dark eyes, long sallow cheeks, compressed thin lips, two or three black ringlets on a high forehead, a cap that Mrs. Grier might wear—altogether an appearance of fallen fortunes, worn-out health, and excessive but guarded irritability. To me there was nothing of that engaging, captivating manner which I had been taught to expect. She seemed to me to be alive only to literary quarrels and jealousies. The muscles of her face as she spoke, or as my father spoke to her, quickly and too easily expressed hatred and anger. . . . She is now, you know, *dévote acharnée*. . . . Madame de Genlis seems to have been so much used to being attacked that she has defence and apologies ready

prepared. She spoke of Madame de Staël's *Delphine* with detestation. . . . Forgive me, my dear Aunt Mary ; you begged me to see her with favourable eyes, and I went, after seeing her *Rosière de Salency*, with the most favourable disposition, but I could not like her. . . . And from time to time I saw, or thought I saw, through the gloom of her countenance a gleam of coquetry. But my father judges of her much more favourably than I do. She evidently took pains to please him, and *he says he is sure she is a person over whose mind he could gain great ascendancy*.

The "young and gay philosopher" at fifty is not unchanged since we knew him first. Maria adds a postscript :—

I had almost forgotten to tell you that the little girl who showed us in is a girl whom she is educating. "Elle m'appelle maman, mais elle n'est pas ma fille." The manner in which this little girl spoke to Madame de Genlis and looked at her appeared to me more in her favour than anything else. I went to look at what the child was writing ; she was translating Darwin's *Zoonomia*.

Every description one reads by Miss Edgeworth of actual things and people makes one wish that she had written more of them. This one is the more interesting from the contrast of the two women, both so remarkable and coming to so different a result in their experience of life.

This eventful visit to Paris is brought to an eventful termination by several gendarmes, who appear early one morning in Mr. Edgeworth's bedroom with orders that he is to get up and to leave Paris immediately. Mr. Edgeworth had been accused of being brother to the Abbé de Firment. When the mitigated circumstance of his being only a first cousin was put forward by Lord Whitworth, the English ambassador, the Edgeworths received permission to return from the suburb to which they had retired ; but private news hurried their departure, and they were only in time to escape the general blockade and detention of English prisoners. After little more than a year of peace, once more war was declared on May 20, 1803. Lovell, the eldest son, who was absent at the time and travelling from Switzerland, was not able to escape in time ; nor for twelve years to come was the young man able to return to his own home and family.

X.

Belinda, Castle Rackrent, the Parents' Assistant, the Essays on Practical Education, had all made their mark. The new series of popular tales was also welcomed. There were other books on the way : Miss Edgeworth had several MSS. in hand in various stages, stories to correct for the press. There was also a long novel, first begun by her father and taken up and carried on by her. The *Essays on Practical Education*, which were first published in 1798, continued to be read. M. Pictet had translated the book into French the year before ; a third edition was published some ten years later, in 1811, in the preface of which the authors say, "It is due to the public to state that twelve years' additional experience in a numerous family, and careful attention to the results of other modes of education, have given the authors no reason to retract what they have advanced in these volumes."

In Mr. Edgeworth's memoirs, however, his daughter states that he modified his opinions in one or two particulars; allowing more and more liberty to the children, and at the same time conceding greater importance to the habit of early though mechanical efforts of memory. The essays seem in every way in advance of their time; many of the hints contained in them most certainly apply to the little children of to-day no less than to their small grandparents. A lady whose own name is high in the annals of education was telling me that she had been greatly struck by the resemblance between the Edgeworth system and that of Froebel's Kindergarten method, which is now gaining more and more ground in people's estimation, the object of both being not so much to cram instruction into early youth as to draw out each child's powers of observation and attention.

The first series of tales of fashionable life came out in 1809, and contained among other stories *Ennui*, one of the most remarkable of Miss Edgeworth's works. The second series included *The Absentee*, that delightful story of which the lesson should be impressed upon us even more than in the year 1812. *The Absentee* was at first only an episode in the longer novel of *Patronage*; but the public was impatient, so were the publishers, and fortunately for every one *The Absentee* was printed as a separate tale.

Patronage had been begun by Mr. Edgeworth to amuse his wife, who was recovering from illness; it was originally called the *Fortunes of the Freeman Family*, and it is a history with a moral. Morals were more in fashion then than they are now, but this one is obvious without any commentary upon it. It is tolerably certain that clever, industrious, well-conducted people will succeed where idle, scheming, and untrustworthy persons will eventually fail to get on even with powerful friends to back them. But the novel has yet to be written that will prove that, where merits are more equal, a little patronage is not of a great deal of use, or that people's positions in life are exactly proportioned to their merit. Mrs. Barbauld's pretty essay on the inconsistency of human expectations contains the best possible answer to the problem of what people's deserts should be. Let us hope that personal advancement is only one of the many things people try for in life, and that there are other prizes as well worth having. Miss Edgeworth herself somewhere speaks with warm admiration of this very essay. Of the novel itself she says (writing to Mrs. Barbauld), "It is so vast a subject that it flounders about in my hands and quite overpowers me."

It is in this same letter that Miss Edgeworth mentions another circumstance which interested her at this time, and which was one of those events occurring now and again to do equal credit to all concerned.

I have written a preface and notes [she says]—for I too would be an editor—for a little book which a very worthy countrywoman of mine is going to publish: Mrs. Leadbeater, granddaughter to Burke's first preceptor. She is poor. She has behaved most handsomely about some letters of Burke's to her grandfather and herself.

It would have been advantageous to her to publish them; but as Mrs. Burke*—Heaven knows why—objected she desisted.

Mrs. Leadbeater was an Irish Quaker lady whose simple and spirited annals of Ballitore delighted Carlyle in his later days, and whose *Cottage Dialogues* greatly struck Mr. Edgeworth at the time. She had written them to assist her family, and the kind Edgeworths, finding her quite unused to publishing transactions, exerted themselves in every way to help her. Mr. Edgeworth took the MSS. out of the hands of an Irish publisher, and, says Maria, “our excellent friend’s worthy successor in St. Paul’s Churchyard has, on our recommendation, agreed to publish it for her.” Mr. Edgeworth’s own letter to Mrs. Leadbeater gives the history of his good-natured offices and their satisfactory results.

From R. L. Edgeworth, July 5, 1810.

Miss Edgeworth desires me as a man of business to write to Mrs. Leadbeater relative to the publication of *Cottage Dialogues*. Miss Edgeworth has written an advertisement, and will, with Mrs. Leadbeater’s permission, write notes for an English edition. The scheme which I propose is of two parts—to sell the English copyright to the house of Johnson in London, where we dispose of our own works, and to publish a very large and cheap edition for Ireland for schools. . . . I can probably introduce the book into many places. Our family takes 300 copies, Lady Longford 50, Dr. Beaufort 20, &c. . . . I think Johnson & Co. will give 50*l.* for the English copyright.

After the transaction Mr. Edgeworth wrote to the publishers as follows:—

May 31, 1811 : Edgeworthtown.
My sixty-eighth birthday.

My dear Gentlemen,—I have just heard your letter to Mrs. Leadbeater read by one who dropped tears of pleasure from a sense of your generous and handsome conduct. I take great pleasure in speaking of you to the rest of the world as you deserve, and I cannot refrain from expressing to yourselves the genuine esteem that I feel for you. I know that this direct praise is scarcely allowable, but my advanced age and my close connexion with you must be my excuse.—Yours sincerely,

R. L. E.

Tears seem equivalent to something more than the estimated value of Mrs. Leadbeater’s labours. Let us hope that the kind publishers may have behaved even more handsomely than Mr. Edgeworth expected. Miss Edgeworth’s notes must also be taken into account. The charming and well-known Mrs. Trench, who was also Mary Leadbeater’s friend, writes to her praising them warmly. “Miss Edgeworth’s notes on your Dialogues have as much spirit and originality as if she had never before explored the mine which many thought she had exhausted.”

All these are pleasant specimens of the Edgeworth correspondence, which, however (following the course of most correspondence), does not seem to have been always equally agreeable. There are some letters (among others which I have been allowed to see) written by her about

* Mrs. Burke, hearing more of the circumstances, afterwards sent permission, but Mrs. Leadbeater being a Quakeress, and having once *promised* not to publish, could not take it upon herself to break her covenant.

this time to an unfortunate young man who seems to have annoyed her greatly by his excited importunities.

I thank you [she says] for your friendly zeal in defence of my powers of pathos and sublimity; but I think it carries you much too far when it leads you to imagine that I refrain from principle or virtue from displaying powers that I really do not possess. I assure you that I am not in the least capable of writing a dithyrambic ode, or any other kind of ode.

One is reminded by this suggestion of poor Jane Austen also having to decline to write "an historical novel illustrative of the august House of Coburg." The young man himself seems to have had some wild aspirations after authorship, but to have feared criticism.

The advantage of the art of printing [says his friendly Minerva] is that the mistakes of individuals in reasoning and writing will be corrected in time by the public, so that the cause of truth cannot suffer; and I presume you are too much of a philosopher to mind the trifling mortification that the detection of a mistake might occasion. You know that some sensible person has observed that acknowledging a mistake is saying only in other words that we are wiser to-day than we were yesterday.

He seems at last to have passed the bounds of reasonable correspondence, and she writes as follows:—

Your last letter, dated in June, was many months before it reached me. In answer to all your reproaches at my silence I can only assure you that it was not caused by any change in my opinions or good wishes; but I do not carry on what is called a regular correspondence with anybody except with one or two of my very nearest relations; and it is best to tell the plain truth that my father particularly dislikes my writing letters, so I write as few as I possibly can.

XI.

While Maria Edgeworth was at work in her Irish home, successfully producing her admirable delineations, another woman, born some eight years later, and living in the quiet Hampshire village where the elm trees spread so greenly, was also at work, also writing books that were destined to influence many a generation, but which were meanwhile waiting unknown, unnoticed. Do we not all know the story of the brown paper parcel lying unopened for years on the publisher's shelf and containing Henry Tilney and all his capes, Catherine Morland and all her romance, and the great John Thorpe himself, uttering those valuable literary criticisms which Lord Macaulay, writing to his little sisters at home, used to quote? "Oh, Lord!" says John Thorpe, "I never read novels; I have other things to do." A friend reminds us of Miss Austen's own indignant outburst. "Only a novel! only *Cecilia*, or *Camilla*, or *Belinda*; or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language." If the great historian, who loved novels himself, had not assured us that we owe Miss Austen and Miss Edge-

worth to the early influence of the author of *Evelina*, one might grudge *Belinda* to such company.

Pride and Prejudice and *Northanger Abbey* were published about the same time as *Patronage* and *Tales of Fashionable Life*. Their two authors illustrate, curiously enough, the difference between the national characteristics of English and Irish—the breadth, the versatility, the innate wit and gaiety of an Irish mind; the comparative narrowness of range of an English nature; where, however, we may get humour and its never-failing charm. Long afterwards Jane Austen sent one of her novels to Miss Edgeworth, who appreciated it indeed, as such a mind as hers could not fail to do, but it was with no such enthusiasm as that which she felt for other more ambitious works, with more of incident, power, knowledge of the world, in the place of that one subtle quality of humour which for some persons outweighs almost every other. Something, some indefinite sentiment, tells people where they amalgamate and with whom they are intellectually akin; and by some such process of criticism the writer feels that in this little memoir of Miss Edgeworth she has but sketched the outer likeness of this remarkable woman's life and genius; and that she has scarcely done justice to very much in Miss Edgeworth, which so many of the foremost men of her day could appreciate, a power, a versatility, an interest in subjects for their own sakes, not for the sakes of those who are interested in them, which was essentially hers.

It is always interesting to watch a writer's progress in the estimation of critics and reviewers. In 1809 Miss Edgeworth is moderately and respectfully noticed. "As a writer of novels and tales she has a marked peculiarity, that of venturing to dispense common sense to her readers and to bring them within the precincts of real life. Without excluding love from her pages she knows how to assign to it its true limits." In 1812 the reviewer, more used to hear the author's praises on all sides, now starts from a higher key, and, as far as truth to nature and delineation of character are concerned, does not allow a rival except *Don Quixote* and *Gil Blas*. The following criticism is just and more to the point:—

To this power of masterly and minute delineation of character Miss Edgeworth adds another which has rarely been combined with the former, that of interweaving the peculiarities of her persons with the conduct of her piece, and making them without forgetting for a moment their personal consistency, conduce to the general lesson. . . . Her virtue and vice, though copied exactly from nature, lead with perfect ease to a moral conclusion, and are finally punished or rewarded by means which (rare as retribution in this world is) appear for the most part neither inconsistent nor unnatural.

Then follows a review of *Vivian* and of *The Absentee*, which is perhaps the most admirable of her works. We may all remember how Macaulay once pronounced that the scene in *The Absentee* where Lord Colambre discovers himself to his tenantry was the best thing of the sort since the opening of the twenty-second book of the *Odyssey*.

An article by Lord Dudley, which is still to be quoted, appeared in

the *Quarterly Review* in 1814. What he says of her works applies no less to Miss Edgeworth's own life than to the principles which she inculcates.

The old rule was for heroes and heroines to fall suddenly and irretrievably in love. If they fell in love with the right person so much the better; if not, it could not be helped, and the novel ended unhappily. And, above all, it was held quite irregular for the most reasonable people to make any use whatever of their reason on the most important occasion of their lives. Miss Edgeworth has presumed to treat this mighty power with far less reverence. She has analysed it and found it does not consist of one simple element, but that several common ingredients enter into its composition—habit, esteem, a belief of some corresponding sentiment and of suitableness in the character and circumstances of the party. She has pronounced that reason, timely and vigorously applied, is almost a specific, and, following up this bold empirical line of practice, she has actually produced cases of the entire cure of persons who had laboured under its operation. Her favourite qualities are prudence, firmness, temper, and that active, vigilant good sense which, without checking the course of our kind affections, exercises its influence at every moment and surveys deliberately the motives and consequences of every action. Utility is her object, reason and experience her means.

XII.

This review of Lord Dudley's must have come out after a visit from the Edgeworth family to London in 1813, which seems to have been a most brilliant and amusing campaign. "I know the homage that was paid you," wrote Mrs. Barbauld, speaking of the event, "and I exulted in it for your sake and for my sex's sake." Miss Edgeworth was at the height of her popularity, in good spirits and good health. Mr. Edgeworth was seventy, but he looked years younger, and was still in undiminished health and vigour. The party was welcomed, feted, sought after everywhere. Except that they miss seeing Madame d'Arblay and leave London before the arrival of Madame de Staél, they seem to have come in for everything that was brilliant, fashionable, and entertaining. They breakfast with poets, they sup with marquises, they call upon duchesses and scientific men. Maria's old friend the Duchess of Wellington is not less her friend than she was in County Longford. Every one likes them and comes knocking at their lodging-house door, while Maria upstairs is writing a letter, standing at a chest of drawers. "Miss Edgeworth is delightful," says Tom Moore, "not from display, but from repose and unaffectedness, the least pretending person." Even Lord Byron writes warmly of the authoress whose company is so grateful, and who goes her simple, pleasant way cheerful and bringing kind cheer, and making friends with the children as well as with the elders. Many of these children in their lives fully justified her interest, children whom we in turn have known and looked up to as distinguished greyheaded men.

Some one once asked Miss Edgeworth how she came to understand children as she did, what charm she used to win them. "I don't know," she said kindly; "I lie down and let them crawl over me." She was greatly pleased on one occasion when at a crowded party a little girl suddenly started forth, looked at her hard, and said, "I like simple

Susan best," and rushed away overwhelmed at her own audacity. The same lady who was present on this occasion asked her a question which we must all be grateful to have solved for us—how it happened that the respective places of Laura and Rosamond came to be transposed in *Patronage*, Laura having been the wiser elder sister in the *Purple Jar*, and appearing suddenly as the younger in the novel. Miss Edgeworth laughed and said that Laura had been so preternaturally wise and thoughtful as a child, she could never have kept her up to the mark, and so she thought it best to change the character altogether.

During one of her visits to London Miss Edgeworth went to dine at the house of Mr. Marshall; and his daughter, Lady Monteagle, tells a little story which gives an impression, and a kind one, of the celebrated guest. Everything had been prepared in her honour, the lights lighted, the viands were cooked. Dinner was announced, and some important person was brought forward to hand Miss Edgeworth down, when it was discovered that she had vanished. For a moment the company and the dinner were all at a standstill. She was a small person, but diligent search was made. Miss Edgeworth had last been seen with the children of the house, and she was eventually found in the back kitchen, escorted by the said children, who, having confided their private affairs to her sympathetic ear, had finally invited her to come with them and see some rabbits which they were rearing down below. A lady who used to live at Clifton as a little girl, and to be sometimes prescribed for by Dr. King, was once brought up to Miss Edgeworth, and she told me how very much puzzled she felt when the bright old lady, taking her by the hand, said, "Well, my dear, how do you do, and how is my excellent brother-in-law?" One can imagine what a vague sort of being an "excellent brother-in-law" would seem to a very young child.

We read in Miss Edgeworth's memoir of her father that Mr. Edgeworth recovered from his serious illness in 1814 to enjoy a few more years of life among his friends, his children, and his experiments. His good humour and good spirits were undiminished, and he used to quote an old friend's praise of "the privileges and convenience of old age." He was seventy, but he seems to have continued his own education to the end of life. "Without affecting to be young, he exerted himself to prevent any of his faculties from sinking into the indolent state which portends their decay," and his daughter says that he went on learning to the last, correcting his faults and practising his memory by various devices, so that it even improved with age.

In one of his last letters to Mrs. Beaufort, his wife's mother, he speaks with no little paternal pleasure of his home and his children: "Such excellent principles, such just views of human life and manners, such cultivated understandings, such charming tempers make a little Paradise about me;" while with regard to his daughter's works he adds concerning the book which was about to appear, "If Maria's tales fail with the public, you will hear of my hanging myself."

Mr. Edgeworth died in the summer of 1817, at home, surrounded by his family, grateful, as he says, to Providence for allowing his body to perish before his mind.

During the melancholy months which succeeded her father's death Maria hardly wrote any letters ; her sight was in a most alarming state. The tears, she said, felt in her eyes like the cutting of a knife. She had overworked them all the previous winter, sitting up at night and struggling with her grief as she wrote *Ormond*. She was now unable to use them without pain. . . . Edgeworthtown now belonged to Lovell, the eldest surviving brother, but he wished it to continue the home of the family. Maria set to work to complete her father's memoirs and to fulfil his last wish.

It was not without great hesitation and anxiety that she set to work to complete her father's Life. There is a touching sentence in a letter to her aunt Ruxton. "I felt the happiness of my life was at stake. Even if all the rest of the world had praised it and you had been dissatisfied, how miserable should I have been !" And there is another sentence written at Bowood, very sad and full of remembrance. "I feel as if I had lived a hundred years and was left alive after everybody else." The book came out, and many things were said about it, not all praise. The *Quarterly* was so spiteful and intolerant that it seemed almost personal in its violence. It certainly would have been a great loss to the world had this curious and interesting memoir never been published, but at the time the absence of certain phrases and expressions of opinions which Mr. Edgeworth had never specially professed seemed greatly to offend the reviewers.

The worst of these attacks Miss Edgeworth never read, and the task finished, the sad months over, the poor eyes recovered, she crossed to England.

XIII.

One is glad to hear of her away and at Bowood in good company, in all senses of the word. Her old friend Lord Henry Petty, now Lord Lansdowne, was still her friend and full of kindness. Outside the house spread a green deer-park to rest her tired eyes, within were pleasant and delightful companions to cheer her soul. Sir Samuel Romilly was there, of whom she speaks with affectionate admiration, as she does of her kind host and hostess. "I much enjoy the sight of Lady Lansdowne's happiness with her husband and her children. Beauty, fortune, cultivated society all united—in short, everything that the most reasonable or unreasonable could wish. She is so amiable and desirous to make others happy."

Miss Edgeworth's power of making other people see with her eyes is very remarkable in all these letters ; with a little imagination one could almost feel as if one might be able to travel back into the pleasant society in which she lived. When she goes abroad soon after with her two younger sisters (Fanny, the baby whose head so nearly came off in her arms, and Harriet, who have both grown up by this time to be pretty and elegant young ladies), the sisters are made welcome everywhere. In Paris, as

in London, troops of acquaintance came forward to receive "Madame Maria et mesdemoiselles ses sœurs," as they used to be announced. Most of their old friends were there still; only the children had grown up and were now new friends to be greeted. It is a confusion of names in visionary succession, comprising English people no less than French. Miss Edgeworth notes it all with a sure hand and true pen; it is as one of the sketch-books of a great painter, where whole pictures are indicated in a few just lines. Here is a peep at the Abbaye aux Bois in 1820:—

We went to Madame Récamier in her convent, l'Abbaye aux Bois, up seventy-eight steps. All came in with asthma. Elegant room; she as elegant as ever. Matthieu de Montmorenci, the ex-Queen of Sweden, Madame de Boigne, a charming woman, and Madame la Maréchale de —, a battered beauty, smelling of garlic and screeching in vain to pass as a wit. . . . Madame Récamier has no more taken the veil than I have, and is as little likely to do it. She is quite beautiful; she dresses herself and her little room with elegant simplicity, and lives in a convent only because it is cheap and respectable.

One sees it all, the convent, the company, the last refrain of former triumphs, the faithful romantic Matthieu de Montmorenci, and above all the poor Maréchale, who will screech for ever in her garlic. Let us turn the page, we find another picture from these not long past days:—

Breakfast at Camille Jordan's; it was half-past twelve before the company assembled, and we had an hour's delightful conversation with Camille Jordan and his wife in her spotless white muslin and little cap, sitting at her husband's feet as he lay on the sofa; as clean, as nice, as fresh, as thoughtless of herself as my mother. At this breakfast we saw three of the most distinguished of that party who call themselves "les Doctrinaires" and say they are more attached to measures than to men.

Here is another portrait of a portrait and its painter:—

Princess Potemkin is a Russian, but she has all the grace, softness, winning manner of the Polish ladies. Oval face, pale, with the finest, softest, most expressive chestnut dark eyes. She has a sort of politeness which pleases peculiarly, a mixture of the ease of high rank and early habit with something that is sentimental without affectation. Madame le Brun is painting her picture. Madame le Brun is sixty-six, with great vivacity as well as genius, and better worth seeing than her pictures, for though they are speaking she speaks.

Another visit the sisters paid, which will interest the readers of Madame de la Rochejaquin's memoirs of the war in the Vendée:—

In a small bedroom, well furnished, with a fire just lighted, we found Madame de la Rochejaquin on the sofa; her two daughters at work, one spinning with a distaff, the other embroidering muslin. Madame is a fat woman with a broad, round, fair face and a most benevolent expression, her hair cut short and perfectly grey as seen under her cap; the rest of the face much too young for such grey locks; and though her face and bundled form all squashed on to a sofa did not at first promise much of gentility, you could not hear her speak or hear her for three minutes without perceiving that she was well-born and well-bred.

Madame de la Rochejaquin seems to have confided in Miss Edgeworth.

"I am always sorry when any stranger sees me, *parce que je sais que je détruis toute illusion. Je sais que je devrais avoir l'air d'une héroïne.*" She is much better than a heroine; she is benevolence and truth itself.

We must not forget the scientific world where Madame Maria was no less at home than in fashionable literary cliques. The sisters saw something of Cuvier at Paris ; in Switzerland they travelled with the Aragos. They were on their way to the Marcets at Geneva when they stopped at Coppet, where Miss Edgeworth was always specially happy in the society of Madame Auguste de Staél and Madame de Broglie. But Switzerland is not one of the places where only human beings are in the ascendant ; other influences there are almost stronger than human ones. "I did not conceive it possible that I should feel so much pleasure from the beauties of nature as I have done since I came to this country. The first moment when I saw Mont Blanc will remain an era in my life—a new idea, a new feeling standing alone in the mind." Miss Edgeworth presently comes down from her mountain heights and, full of interest, throws herself into the talk of her friends at Coppet and Geneva, from which she quotes as it occurs to her. Here is Rocca's indignant speech to Lord Byron, who was abusing the stupidity of the Genevese. "Eh ! milord, pourquoi venir vous fourrer parmi ces honnêtes gens ?" There is Arago's curious anecdote of Napoleon, who sent for him after the battle of Waterloo, offering him a large sum of money to accompany him to America. The Emperor had formed a project for founding a scientific colony in the New World. Arago was so indignant with him for abandoning his troops that he would have nothing to say to the plan. A far more touching story is Dr. Marcket's account of Josephine. "Poor Josephine ! Do you remember Dr. Marcket's telling us that when he breakfasted with her she said, pointing to her flowers, 'These are my subjects. I try to make them happy'?"

Among other expeditions they made a pilgrimage to the home of the author of a work for which Miss Edgeworth seems to have entertained a mysterious enthusiasm. The novel was called *Caroline de Lichfield*, and was so much admired at the time that Miss Seward mentions a gentleman who wrote from abroad to propose for the hand of the authoress, and who, more fortunate than the poor Chevalier Edelcrantz, was not refused by the lady. Perhaps some similarity of experience may have led Maria Edgeworth to wish for the lady's acquaintance. Happily time was past for Miss Edgeworth to look back ; her life was now shaped and moulded in its own groove ; the consideration, the variety, the difficulties of unmarried life were hers, its agreeable change, its monotony of feeling and of unselfish happiness, compared with the necessary regularity, the more personal felicity, the less liberal interests of the married. Her life seems to have been full to overflowing of practical occupation and consideration for others. What changing scenes and colours, what a number of voices, what a crowd of outstretched hands, what interesting processions of people pass across her path ! There is something of her father's optimism and simplicity of nature in her unceasing brightness and activity, in her resolutions to improve as time goes on. Her young brothers and sisters grow to be men and women ; with her

sisters' marriages new interests touch her warm heart. Between her and the brothers of the younger generation who did not turn to her as a sort of mother there may have been too great a difference of age for that companionship to continue which often exists between a child and a grown-up person. So at least one is led to believe was the case as regards one of them, mentioned in a memoir which has recently appeared. But to her sisters she could be friend, protector, chaperone, sympathising companion, and elder sister to the end of her days. We hear of them all at Bowood again on their way back to Ireland, and then we find them all at home settling down to the old life, Maria reading Sévigné of whom she never tires.

XIV.

One of the prettiest and most sympathetic incidents in Maria Edgeworth's life was a subsequent expedition to Abbotsford and the pleasure she gave to its master. They first met in Edinburgh, and her short account conjures up the whole scene before us :—

Ten o'clock struck as I read his note. We were tired, we were not fit to be seen, but I thought it right to accept Walter Scott's cordial invitation, sent for a hackney coach, and just as we were, without dressing, we went. As the coach stopped we saw the hall lighted, and the moment the door opened heard the joyous sounds of loud singing. Three servants' "The Miss Edgeworths!" sounded from hall to landing-place, and as I paused for a moment in the anteroom I heard the first sound of Walter Scott's voice—"The Miss Edgeworths come!" The room was lighted by only one globe lamp; a circle were singing loud and beating time: all stopped in an instant.

Is not this picture complete? Scott himself she describes as "full of genius without the slightest effort at expression, delightfully natural, more lame but not so unwieldy as she expected." Lady Scott she goes on to sketch in some half-dozen words—"French, large dark eyes, civil and good-natured."

When we wakened the next morning the whole scene of the preceding night seemed like a dream [she continues]; however at twelve came the real Lady Scott, and we called for Scott at the Parliament House, who came out of the Courts with joyous face, as if he had nothing on earth to do or to think of but to show us Edinburgh.

In her quick, discriminating way she looks round and notes them all one by one.

Mr. Lockhart is reserved and silent, but he appears to have much sensibility under this reserve. Mrs. Lockhart is very pleasing—a slight, elegant figure and graceful simplicity of manner, perfectly natural. There is something most winning in her affectionate manner to her father. He dotes upon her.

A serious illness intervened for poor Maria before she and her devoted young nurses could reach Abbotsford itself. There she began to recover, and Lady Scott watched over her and prescribed for her with the most tender care and kindness. "Lady Scott felt the attention and respect Maria showed to her, perceiving that she valued her and treated her as a friend," says Mrs. Edgeworth; "not, as too many of Sir Walter's

guests did, with neglect." This is Miss Edgeworth's description of the Abbotsford family life :—

It is quite delightful to see Scott and his family in the country ; breakfast, dinner, supper, the same flow of kindness, fondness, and genius, far, far surpassing his works, his letters, and all my hopes and imagination. His Castle of Abbotsford is magnificent, but I forget it in thinking of him.

The return visit, when Scotland visited Ireland, was no less successful.

Maria and my daughter Harriet accompanied Sir Walter and Miss Scott, Mr. Lockhart, and Captain and Mrs. Scott to Killarney. They travelled in an open calèche of Sir Walter's . . .

Sir Walter was, like Maria, never put out by discomforts on a journey, but always ready to make the best of everything and to find amusement in every incident. He was delighted with Maria's eagerness for everybody's comfort, and diverted himself with her admiration of a green baize-covered door at the inn at Killarney. "Miss Edgeworth, you are so mightily pleased with that door, I think you will carry it away with you to Edgeworthtown."

Miss Edgeworth's friendships were certainly very remarkable, and comprise almost all the interesting people of her day in France as well as in England. She was liked, trusted, surrounded, and she appears to have had the art of winning to her all the great men. We know the Duke of Wellington addressed verses to her ; there are pleasant intimations of her acquaintance with Sir James Mackintosh, Romilly, Moore, and Rogers, and that most delightful of human beings Sydney Smith, whom she thoroughly appreciated and admired. Describing her brother Frank, she says, somewhere, "I am much inclined to think that he has a natural genius for happiness ; in other words, as Sydney Smith would say, *great hereditary constitutional joy*." "To attempt to outboswell Boswell," she writes in another letter home ; but in Lady Holland's memoir of her father there is a pleasant little account of Miss Edgeworth herself, "delightful, clever, and sensible," listening to Sydney Smith. She seems to have gone the round of his parish with him while he scolded, doctored, joked his poor people according to their needs.

"During her visit she saw much of my father," says Lady Holland ; "and her talents as well as her thorough knowledge and love of Ireland made her conversation peculiarly agreeable to him." On her side Maria writes warmly desiring that some Irish bishopric might be forced upon Sydney Smith, which "his own sense of natural charity and humanity would forbid him refuse. . . . In the twinkling of an eye—such an eye as his—he would see all our manifold grievances up and down the country. One word, one *bon mot* of his, would do more for us, I guess, than —'s four hundred pages and all the like with which we have been bored."

The two knew how to make good company for one another ; the quiet Jeanie Deans body could listen as well as give out. We are told that it was not so much that she said brilliant things, but that a general

perfume of wit ran through her conversation, and she most certainly had the gift of appreciating the good things of others. Whether in that "scene of simplicity, truth, and nature" a London rout, or in some quiet Hampstead parlour talking to an old friend, or in her own home among books and relations and interests of every sort, Miss Edgeworth seems to have been constantly the same, with presence of mind and presence of heart too, ready to respond to everything. I think her warmth of heart shines even brighter than her wit at times. "I could not bear the idea that you suspected me of being so weak, so vain, so senseless," she once wrote to Mrs. Barbauld, "as to have my head turned by a little fashionable flattery." If her head was not turned it must have been because her spirit was stout enough to withstand the world's almost irresistible influence.

Not only the great men but the women too are among her friends. She writes prettily of Mrs. Somerville, with her smiling eyes and pink colour, her soft voice, strong, well-bred Scotch accent, timid, not disqualifying timid, but naturally modest. "While her head is among the stars her feet are firm upon the earth." She is "delighted" with a criticism of Madame de Staël's, in a letter to M. Dumont. "Vraiment elle était digne de l'enthousiasme, mais elle se perd dans votre triste utilité." It is difficult to understand why this should have given Miss Edgeworth so much pleasure; and here finally is a little vision conjured up for us of her meeting with Mrs. Fry among her prisoners.

Little doors, and thick doors, and doors of all sorts were unbolted and unlocked, and on we went through dreary but clean passages till we came to a room where rows of empty benches fronted us, a table on which lay a large Bible. Several ladies and gentlemen entered, took their seats on benches at either side of the table in silence. Enter Mrs. Fry in a drab-coloured silk cloak and a plain, borderless Quaker cap, a most benevolent countenance, calm, benign. "I must make an enquiry. Is Maria Edgeworth here?" And when I went forward she bade me come and sit beside her. Her first smile as she looked upon me I can never forget. The prisoners came in in an orderly manner and ranged themselves upon the benches.

XV.

"In this my sixtieth year, to commence in a few days," says Miss Edgeworth, writing to her cousin Margaret Ruxton, "I am resolved to make great progress." "Rosamond at sixty," says Miss Ruxton, touched and amused. Her resolutions were not idle.

"The universal difficulties of the money market in the year 1826 were felt by us," says Mrs. Edgeworth in her memoir, "and Maria, who since her father's death had given up rent-receiving, now resumed it; undertook the management of her brother Lovell's affairs, which she conducted with consummate skill and perseverance, and weathered the storm that swamped so many in this financial crisis." We also hear of an opportune windfall in the shape of some valuable diamonds, which an old lady, a distant relation, left in her will to Miss Edgeworth, who sold them and built a market-house for Edgeworthtown with the proceeds.

April 8, 1827.—I am quite well, and in high good humour and good spirits, in consequence of having received the whole of Lovell's half-year's rents in full, with pleasure to the tenants and without the least fatigue or anxiety to myself.

It was about this time her novel of *Helen* was written, the last of her books, the only one that her father had not revised. There is a vivid account given by one of her brothers of the family assembled in the library to hear the manuscript read out, of their anxiety and their pleasure as they realised how good it was, how spirited, how well equal to her standard. Ticknor, in his account of Miss Edgeworth, says that the talk of Lady Davenant in *Helen* is very like Miss Edgeworth's own manner. His visit to Edgeworthtown was not long after the publication of the book. His description, if only for her mention of her father, is worth quoting:—

As we drove to the door Miss Edgeworth came out to meet us, a small, short, spare body of about sixty-seven, with extremely frank and kind manners, but who always looks straight into your face with a pair of mild deep grey eyes whenever she speaks to you. With characteristic directness she did not take us into the library until she had told us that we should find there Mrs. Alison, of Edinburgh, and her aunt, Miss Sneyd, a person very old and infirm, and that the only other persons constituting the family were Mrs. Edgeworth, Miss Honora Edgeworth, and Dr. Alison, a physician. . . . Miss Edgeworth's conversation was always ready, as full of vivacity and variety as I can imagine. . . . She was disposed to defend everybody, even Lady Morgan, as far as she could. And in her intercourse with her family she was quite delightful, referring constantly to Mrs. Edgeworth, who seems to be the authority in all matters of fact, and most kindly repeating jokes to her infirm aunt, Miss Sneyd, who cannot hear them, and who seems to have for her the most unbounded affection and admiration. . . . About herself as an author she seems to have no reserve or secrets. She spoke with great kindness and pleasure of a letter I brought to her from Mr. Peabody, explaining some passage in his review of *Helen* which had troubled her from its allusion to her father. "But," she added, "no one can know what I owe to my father. He advised and directed me in everything. I never could have done anything without him. There are things I cannot be mistaken about, though other people can. I know them." As she said this the tears stood in her eyes, and her whole person was moved. . . . It was, therefore, something of a trial to talk so brilliantly and variously as she did from nine in the morning to past eleven at night.

She was unfeignedly glad to see good company. Here is her account of another visitor:—

Sept. 26.—The day before yesterday we were amusing ourselves by telling who among literary and scientific people we should wish to come here next. Francis said Coleridge; I said Herschell. Yesterday morning, as I was returning from my morning walk at half-past eight, I saw a bonnetless maid in the walk, with a letter in her hand, in search of me. When I opened the letter I found it was from Mr. Herschell, and that he was waiting for an answer at Mr. Briggs's inn. I have seldom been so agreeably surprised, and now that he is gone and that he has spent twenty-four hours here, if the fairy were to ask me the question again I should still more eagerly say, "Mr. Herschell, ma'am, if you please."

She still came over to England from time to time, visiting at her sisters' houses. Honora was now Lady Beaufort; another sister, Fanny, the object of her closest and most tender affection, was Mrs. Lestock Wilson. Age brought no change in her mode of life. Time passes

with tranquil steps, for her not hastening unduly. "I am perfect," she writes at the age of seventy-three to her stepmother of seventy-two, "so no more about it, and thank you from my heart and every component part of my precious self for all the care, and successful care, you have taken of me, your old petted nurseling."

Alas! it is sad to realise that quite late in life fresh sorrows fell upon this warm-hearted woman. Troubles gather; young sisters fade away in their beauty and happiness. But in sad times and good times the old home is still unchanged, and remains for those that are left to turn to for shelter, for help and consolation. To the very last Miss Edgeworth kept up her reading, her correspondence, her energy. All along we have heard of her active habits—out in the early morning in her garden, coming in to the nine o'clock breakfast with her hands full of roses, sitting by and talking and reading her letters while the others ate. Her last letter to her old friend Sir Henry Holland was after reading the first volume of Lord Macaulay's history. Sir Henry took the letter to Lord Macaulay, who was so much struck by its discrimination that he asked leave to keep it.

She was now eighty-two years of age, and we find her laughing kindly at the anxiety of her sister and brother-in-law, who had heard of her climbing a ladder to wind up an old clock at Edgeworthtown. "I am heartily obliged and delighted by your being such a goose and Richard such a gander," she says, "as to be frightened out of your wits by my climbing a ladder to take off the top of the clock." She had not felt that there was anything to fear as once again she set the time that was so nearly at an end for her. Her share of life's hours had been well spent and well enjoyed; with a peaceful and steady hand and tranquil heart she might mark the dial for others whose hours were still to come.

Mrs. Edgeworth's own words tell all that remains to be told.

It was on the morning of May 22, 1849, that she was taken suddenly ill with pain in the region of the heart, and after a few hours breathed her last in my arms. She had always wished to die quickly, at home, and that I should be with her. All her wishes were fulfilled. She was gone, and nothing like her again can we see in this world.

The Menacing Comet.

A FEW months ago a dismal report appeared to the effect that the comet of 1843, which was supposed to have returned in 1880, would come back again in 1895 and bring about the end of the world. The origin of the report was not altogether clear. At least it was not altogether clear to the writer of these lines, who, if the report had had any legitimate foundation, should have known something about it. It seems that a remark to the effect that the comet of 1880 travelled in the same orbit as the comet of 1843, and was probably the same body, but that if that were the case, it had returned long before it should have done, so that the period of revolution seemed to be shortening, had been to some degree misapprehended.

It had been suggested by several Fellows of the Royal Astronomical Society that if the comet of 1880 were really the same as that of 1843, the next return might occur in a very few years; perhaps, said Mr. Marth, in about fifteen; and each return thereafter at shorter and ever shorter intervals. For the path of the comet carries it in very close proximity to the orb of the sun; and it is generally believed that a retardation of the comet's motion must occur at each return to the sun's neighbourhood, for the simple reason that the comet can hardly be supposed to get through the matter which forms the sun's corona, without encountering some resistance. The more the comet is retarded by such resistance, the faster it will travel round its orbit—paradoxical though this may sound. At each return it will encounter more and more effective resistance, until at length it must be absorbed into the body of the sun.

Whether such absorption would produce any great effect or not upon the sun, and through him upon the solar system, was a question which to many seemed answerable only in one way. Newton had pointed out that comets might serve as fuel to the sun, and perhaps produce disastrous effects in that way, by unduly increasing the solar light and heat. "A comet," he said, "after certain revolutions, by coming nearer and nearer to the sun, would have all its volatile parts condensed, and become a matter fit to recruit and replenish the sun (which must waste by the constant light and heat it emits) as a faggot would this fire if put into it." (He was speaking to Mr. Conduitt at the time, beside a wood fire.) "And that would probably be the effect of the comet of 1680 sooner or later; for by the observations made upon it, it seemed to have a tail of thirty or forty degrees, when it went from the sun. It might, perhaps, make five or six revolutions more first; but whenever it did, it

would so much increase the heat of the sun, that this earth would be burnt, and no animals in it could live." "He took the three phenomena seen by Hipparchus, Tycho Brahe, and Kepler's disciples," he added, "to have been of this kind; for he could not otherwise account for an extraordinary light, as those were, appearing all at once amongst the fixed stars (all which he took to be suns enlightening other planets, as our sun does ours) as big as Mercury or Venus seems to us, and gradually diminishing for sixteen months and then sinking into nothing."

But although what we now know respecting the mass of comets is by no means so much opposed to these views as many seem to imagine, our knowledge of the way in which the sun's heat is maintained will not permit us to adopt Newton's opinion. Nor will the accepted views as to the origin of the sun's heat justify us in accepting a belief in more than a very moderate accession of heat as likely to accrue, under any influences due to comets now actually travelling around the sun. All those which have passed once round the sun's immediate neighbourhood, can pass again, and yet again, with effects which can never greatly exceed those produced at their first passage. If at any one perihelion passage a comet is slightly retarded, it will be slightly retarded again at its next passage close by the sun, somewhat more at the next return, and so on continually, until it is finally absorbed, the interval between these passages continually diminishing. Only in the case of great retardation at one passage, will the retardation at the next perihelion passage be markedly greater; but in this case the effects at the earlier passage should have been noteworthy; so that as no noteworthy sudden accession of solar light and heat has ever been observed, no such earlier passage has yet occurred which should make us seriously fear the next passage of the same comet by the sun's neighbourhood.

The fears entertained, therefore, respecting the next return of the comet of 1843 are without foundation. If that comet was really so checked in speed in 1843 that it returned in thirty-seven years instead of the much longer period assigned to it by the best astronomers, then we had an opportunity at that time of estimating the effect of such interruption of the comet's motion. But no effects were then perceived. The sun was neither brighter nor hotter than usual. The inference is, then, that that frictional resistance cannot appreciably affect the sun's condition. In 1880 we had a repetition of this experience—assuming that the comet of 1880 was the same body. The sun in 1880 shone much as he had done in 1879, much as he did later in 1881 and 1882. So that the world might await with calmness the future returns of this sun-lashing comet, satisfied that whatever effect might be produced on the comet, very little would be produced on the sun or the solar system.

But now suddenly news comes that a comet has been seen which American men of science have identified with the comet of 1843 and 1880, so that from thirty-seven years the period has dwindled to little more than two years and a half (more exactly 2 years, 7 months, and 21

days), which would leave us every reason for believing that the next return would occur in a few months, and the final absorption of the comet by the sun a few weeks later. And an English astronomer of deserved repute has done something more than endorse these ill-omened predictions ; he has pretty clearly indicated his opinion that the approaching destruction of the comet portends events of the most serious import to this earth and all who dwell on it ; that, in fact, the time is drawing near when Prospero's prediction is to be fulfilled that—

The great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like an insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.

“ Could there have been anything more heartbreaking to all astronomical souls,” writes Professor Piazzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal for Scotland, “ than the uninterrupted cloud by day and by night of our unfortunate climate, ever since the announcement of the brilliant daylight comet of Monday, September 18 ? Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and their several nights, have each and all been uniformly utterly covered in with thick impenetrable clouds. And yet we ought to confess that one other thing might have occurred even so as to make that cloudy appearance more aggravating, more grievously disappointing still. That one overtopping culmination of misfortune would have been”—if the comet had been announced as approaching instead of receding.

It will be seen that the Astronomer Royal for Scotland regards the comet in question as a rather important body. It is not an everyday comet whose approach is so important that failing to see it must be regarded as an “ overtopping culmination of misfortune.” Now *this* comet seems to be none other than *that* comet. The body, or collection of bodies (for so rather must a comet now be regarded), which was visible to the naked eye on September 18 close to the sun—“ a yard or so from the sun,” writes one startled observer—is no other than the comet of 1843, whose tail stretched half across the heavens, and which—like the comet of last month—was seen in full daylight; nay, even “ close by the sun.”

Rightly to apprehend the significance of this portent, as viewed by Professor Smyth and many others, chiefly—unlike him—unscientific persons, we should inform our readers that in this year, according to the prophecies symbolically indicated in the Great Pyramid, the end of the dispensation which began 1882 years ago is in some way as yet unknown to be brought about. Some celestial body, “ the star in the East ” of the Magi, appeared then : for aught we know it may have been the same comet, and the Wise Men of the East saw in it evidence that a new dispensation was about to begin. It was fitting, then, that this year, which has now been for several years announced as the time of the end of that dispensation, a similar celestial appearance, or the same body, perhaps,

should announce "the beginning of the end." We cannot reasonably doubt this, for careful measurement shows that the Grand Gallery in the Great Pyramid is 1,882 inches long; these inches being each the twenty-fifth part of the sacred cubit, which Pyramidalists assure us is the limit of length in that marvellous structure. Moreover, it is not altogether an accident or a mere coincidence which has brought the British army to the feet of the Great Pyramid at the very time—perhaps at the very hour—when the great comet was passing its perihelion. On September 13 the British cavalry entered Cairo; on September 18 the great comet could be seen with the naked eye (though it had passed the time of its greatest splendour, described by Professor Smyth as the "ecstatic display at perihelion passage"), and was then beginning to recede. What more natural than to suppose that as the vanguard of Sir Garnet Wolseley's army approached the base of the Pyramids, the great comet was in the very ecstasy of perihelion glory, rushing through the richest portion of the sun's coronal streamers, molten by the solar heat, resisted by the densely aggregated meteor-streams, but so retarded that its return will be hastened, and that in a few months it will come back to effect the final purpose of its existence! If any doubt could be entertained on the subject, it should be removed by the consideration that the British nation has been proved, to the satisfaction of nearly all true believers in the Great Pyramid prophecies, to be no other than the lost ten tribes of Israel.

If this sounds a little strange—or, shall we say, the least little bit premature?—let the following words by the Astronomer Royal for Scotland, by no means the least able of our astronomers, and *facile princeps* among Pyramidalists, be carefully considered.

"What comet," he asks, "was this? The little that was seen on Monday, September 18, is not enough to give any clue, and no London journals, whether scientific or political, which I have seen up to September 23, throw any light on the matter. But a note by cable from America, if fully correct, is of profound import. Indeed, *nothing so important to all mankind has occurred before, through eighteen hundred years at least of astronomical history.* And there is this prospect of the statement being true, that it is given under the name of Professor Lewis Boss, one of the most able and learned mathematical astronomers of the Union, and, we may say now (such has been the rapid progress of astronomy during the last few years in that country), of the world. He is said, then, to have concluded from his observations that the comet of last Monday was the comet of 1880 and 1843. A comet on each of these occasions was recognised to have passed closer to the sun's surface than any other known comet. But why has it come back so soon? In 1843 it appeared to be moving in an orbit of 170 years, and yet it came back in 1880, or in only 37 years. That was startling enough, though only looked on by the world as a case of failure of astronomical prediction. But having gone off in 1880 on an understanding generally come

to by the best astronomers in Europe, North America, Rio Janeiro, the Argentine Republic, and Australia—at all which latter places it had been well observed—that it was not to return before 37 years (and other comets, such as Halley's, and Encke's, keep to their times of revolution round the sun nearly uniformly for centuries), behold this comet has returned now, on the strength of this cablegram from America, in two years. In which case, who can say whether it may not be back again from space in a few months; and then, not merely to graze close past, but actually to fall into the sun, which is so evidently increasing its hold upon it at every revolution? Wherefore we may be near upon the time for witnessing what effects will be produced when such an event takes place in the solar system, as astronomers have hitherto only distantly speculated upon, and no mortal eye is known to have ever beheld."

This brings the matter home to all of us, indeed. Astronomers like Newton have distantly speculated upon the effects which would be produced if a comet fell into the sun. I fear that I have not altogether refrained from such speculations myself. Indeed, the misapprehension to which I referred at the beginning of this paper arose chiefly from such speculations of my own. For speaking, not of such grazing contact as may occur in the case of the comet of 1843 and 1880, but of such direct impact as *may* through some unlucky chance occur in the case of some comet which comes to our sun from interstellar space, I have expressed the opinion that such impact may raise the sun's heat temporarily to such intensity that every living thing on this earth would be destroyed, though the increase of heat might not last more than a few weeks or even days. I also expressed my belief (entertained before I had heard that Sir Isaac Newton, in conversation with Mr. Conduitt, had expressed similar views) that the appearance of so-called "new stars" can only be explained by the downfall of meteoric and cometic matter upon some sun like our own, which up to that time had been steadily pouring forth heat and light to nourish the worlds circling around it. This opinion, chancing to be expressed in the closing paragraph of the same paper in which I had indicated my belief that the comet of 1880 really was the same body as the comet of 1843, returned before its time, and that this body would return next after a yet shorter interval, led many to imagine that I had expressed the opinion that the comet of 1843 and 1880, returning soon, would cause our sun to blaze out with greatly increased splendour, and so to destroy all living creatures on this earth.

Now the actual risk from the destruction of this comet by the sun I believe to be very small indeed. But as to the identity of the comet which passed its perihelion on September 17 last and the comets of 1880 and 1843 there is, I think, little room for doubt. I have carefully compared the observed positions on September 17, 18, 19, 22, 24, and 29, with the known orbit of the comet of 1843, and they all agree so closely as to leave no doubt that the new comet is travelling in the same track, so far as the part near the sun is concerned. But I note one

circumstance which seems hitherto to have escaped attention. Although the course of the new comet as it passed away was on the right track, the comet was not making nearly so much way as it should have done, if moving even in the reduced period of $2\frac{2}{3}$ years, or even in one year, or in half a year. In other words, the reduction of speed experienced by the comet last September was such that the comet will be back within four or five months, possibly in less time still than that. It may be that the observations (up to the day of my writing this, which of course precedes by several weeks the day when these words can be read) have been insufficiently exact for accuracy in this respect. But if they can be trusted, the comet will be back in a very short time indeed, possibly before the end of the year—an announcement which should fill the hearts of Pyramidalists with joy.

Be this as it may, it is certain that the splendid comet seen on September 18 and 19 close to the noonday sun, although not seen under conditions at all favourable to ordinary observation, gave of all the comets seen in this century, nay, of all ever seen by man, the fullest promise that one day cometic mysteries will be interpreted. An observation was made upon this comet successfully, which, repeated on similar comets more favourably situated, will give information such as astronomers have long regarded as essential to the solution of cometic mysteries, but such also as they have hitherto scarce dared to hope for.

It is of course known to all who have followed the progress of recent scientific research, that nearly all the comets which have been observed during the last score or so of years, have given under spectroscopic analysis such evidence as shows that a portion of their light comes from glowing gas. Two distinct cometic spectra have been observed—Dr. Huggins, *facile princeps* among British spectroscopists, first noted them in the case of Brorsen's comet, and of Winnecke's—each consisting of bright bands. In one case the bands have not been identified with those belonging to any known terrestrial substance; but the other and more common cometic spectrum agrees with one which has been found to be characteristic of certain compounds of carbon. "The general close agreement in all cases," writes Dr. Huggins, "notwithstanding some small divergencies, of the bright bands in the cometary light with those seen in the spectra of hydrocarbons, justifies us fully in ascribing the original light of these comets to matter which contains carbon in combination with hydrogen."

These spectra of bands had been seen so systematically from 1864, when Donati made the first rough observations of the cometic spectrum, until Wells's comet was observed a few months ago, that astronomers began to think that they would get no other information from comets. It was especially unsatisfactory that no bright or dark *lines* could be seen. For in the case of one particular class of spectroscopic observations, which seemed specially likely to give interesting information about comets, bright *bands* in the spectrum are absolutely useless. We refer to those

observations which indicate rapid motions of recession or approach, by displacements of the spectrum. Such displacement is always exceedingly small even in the case of bodies moving at the rate of twenty or thirty miles per second. It therefore cannot possibly be determined by observing a spectrum of broad bands of light, with no well-defined edges by which to recognise displacement.

But Wells's comet last spring, though it attracted no special attention from ordinary stargazers, showed for the first time a new and promising feature. This comet, which had shown the carbon bands like other comets during the first month or two of its approach towards the sun after its discovery, began, when it drew within a certain distance from him, to show evidence of the presence of glowing sodium. A few days later the pair of orange lines in the spectrum which indicate the presence of this widely distributed element, were very bright and distinct, and they continued so until the comet passed out of view from our northern heavens.

Now there was double promise in this observation. First, it showed that the changes of appearance which a comet undergoes as it draws nearer to the sun are accompanied by changes of physical condition with which the spectroscope can deal. Secondly, as the bright lines of sodium are well defined, and as their proper place in the spectrum is known, there was promise that hereafter observations might be made to determine movements of recession or of approach which may be taking place either in different parts of the comet, or in the comet as a whole.

Let us first consider the application of spectrum analysis to determine the changes taking place in the physical condition of a comet.

It is obviously a most promising circumstance that evidence should now be attainable to show what is the real physical constitution of those different parts of a comet which present such striking changes as the comet approaches the sun. Hitherto all that has been seen has been the raising up of luminous envelopes on the side towards the sun, and the apparent sweeping away of the matter thus formed into the strange appendage called the tail. But hereafter, in the case of any comet which like Donati's (in 1858) exhibits under favourable conditions the various changes due to the increased proximity of a comet to the sun, it will be found possible to recognise by means of the spectroscope the substances which are successively volatilised as the comet moves towards its perihelion. It may possibly be found that when a comet shows, as Donati's did, several envelopes one within the other, the luminous vapours forming these are of different substance. The constitution of the tail, too, may be found to vary as the comet changes in position. Where there are more tails than one, as in the case of Donati's comet, and of other celebrated comets, the spectroscope may indicate varieties of physical structure and condition. Possibly, Bredichin's theory, that three different substances—iron, carbon, and hydrogen—driven from the sun with different velocities, form the several tails of such comets, may be established by the spectroscopic analysis of these appendages. It may

very probably be found, also, that even in the case of a comet with but a single tail, the physical constitution of the tail varies in different parts of its length.

But the possibility that movements in the nucleus, coma, and tail of a comet, may be detected by spectroscopic analysis, is yet fuller of promise.

Let us briefly consider the nature of this method of observation.

When we approach a point from which waves of any sort are moving, we cross the waves in more rapid succession, and the effect is as though they were narrowed. When, on the other hand, we recede from their source, so that the waves (moving, it is understood, more quickly than we do) overtake us, they pass us in less rapid succession, and the effect is as though they were made broader. (We speak, of course, of their width as measured from crest to crest.) We can easily see that this would be so in a sea across which waves were swiftly travelling, a stout swimmer urging his way so as either to meet them or to be overtaken by them. It has been shown, also, experimentally that this is true of sound. When we approach a source of sound, the tone is raised (or rather appears to the ear to be so, for, of course, the sound-waves on which the tone depends are not really altered), whereas when we recede from the source of sound the tone seems lowered. This observation, indeed, may readily be made by any observant person in railway travelling; for it will be noticed that whenever the whistle of a passing engine is sounded the tone falls suddenly, or seems to do so, at the moment when the engine which had been approaching begins (having passed us) to recede. In the case of light, it was long since pointed out by Doppler that a similar effect should be produced, if only the velocity of approach or recession is not too small to be appreciable when compared with the tremendous velocity of light—186,000 miles per second.* The effect would theoretically be a change of colours in the case of light really of a single pure colour. For light belonging to the red end of the spectrum is formed by waves of greater length than those which form light belonging to the violet end of the spectrum; and the various colours of the spectrum from the red to the violet end have wave-lengths gradually diminishing from the greatest length at the red end to the least length at the violet. Doppler was bold enough to hope that by this method the colours of the stars might indicate stellar movements of recession or of approach. But of that he should have seen, had he reasoned the matter aright, there was no hope or even possibility. For the light of a star contains rays of all colours from red to violet, and rays beyond the red on one side, and beyond the violet on the other, which therefore no eye can see. The only effect of any diminution of all the wave-lengths

* It may, perhaps, be of interest to some readers of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE to learn that the first matter ever written by me for the press related to this very subject and appeared as an article entitled "The Colours of the Double Stars," in the CORNHILL MAGAZINE for December, 1863.

would be that a part of the violet light would be lost as light, but its place would be taken by light from the indigo, that by light from the blue, and so on, the light from the red which became orange being replaced by rays otherwise invisible from beyond the red. And similarly (only the change would be in the other direction) in the case of an increase in all the wave-lengths.

But it was early shown (so far as I know I was the first to refer to the matter publicly, but Dr. Huggins—unknown to me—was working at the very time on the plan indicated) that the lines in the spectrum would be shifted—towards the red in the case of recession from the source of light, and towards the violet in the case of approach towards that source. This displacement can be measured—if great enough, or rather, if not too small; for, in the case of all such motions as are taking place among the stars and planets, the displacement must be very, very small indeed.

Now to comets more than to any other class of celestial bodies this method might, it would seem, be advantageously applied. For not only do comets themselves move during a part of their course around the sun with enormous velocity, but within the comet itself changes take place which seem to imply enormously rapid motions. In particular the development of the tail, although it has not been absolutely demonstrated to be due to repulsive action, yet seems explicable in no other way; and if it is thus caused, the movement of the matter forming the tail must take place with a velocity bringing it well within the application of the spectroscopic method.

But it is essential for the use of this method that the spectrum of the moving body should have well-defined and recognisable lines. Bands, such as those in the spectrum of the comets first observed, are utterly useless for this purpose. Their precise position cannot be determined so that we could be sure of any displacement due to motion. For this purpose we must have a line, which, when the spectrum is brought side by side with that of a terrestrial substance showing the same line, will be in line with this if the celestial source of light is at rest, and will be recognisably displaced towards the red or towards the blue if that luminous body is receding or approaching respectively.

So that when, last May, Wells's comet suddenly began to show the well-known lines of sodium, promise was at once, and for the first time, afforded, that the problems of cometary changes, in so far as these depend on motions taking place within the comet itself, may before long be solved. We can have very little doubt, for instance, that if such a comet as Donati's were now to appear, and to be studied under favourable conditions during those parts of its course in which it was subject to the most intense disturbing action, the bright lines which would be seen in the comet's spectrum would either by their displacement tell us that the substance of the comet is driven wildly hither and thither in the head and swept swiftly away to form the tail, as it *seems* to be,

or else, by remaining unchanged in position, would show that there are no such movements of disturbance or repulsion.

Now the comet which has recently been seen near the sun has been observed by this method. On September 18, when it was but three degrees (say half a dozen sun-breadths) from the sun on the sky, it was examined in the clear sky of Nice by M. Thollon, a skilful French spectroscopist.

The spectrum, notwithstanding the obviously unfavourable conditions under which the observation was made, showed clearly the line (or rather the double line) of sodium. Here, by the way, was at once evidence such as in former times no astronomer could have of the comet's real position in space. Formerly if a comet was observed anywhere, once only, nothing could be certainly known respecting its position, except that it was somewhere in the line of sight in which it was seen. But if we are right in believing that the sodium in a comet is only vaporised and rendered self-luminous when the comet is near the sun, then the new comet on September 18 was not only shown to lie in a certain direction, but within certain tolerably narrow limits of distance.

But Thollon observed something else, not quite so satisfactorily as to be absolutely certain of it, but still so as to give a considerable degree of assurance. He says that the line of sodium seemed displaced towards the red. This would indicate recession. Observe here again how the spectroscopic method of determining motions of recession or approach may come in to help the astronomer to determine the position of a comet. Supposing this method should ever be so improved that the exact rate of a comet's motion might be determined by it, then instead of merely ascertaining, in any single observation, the direction in which a comet lies at the moment, the astronomer may learn its direction, something (as we have seen) of its distance, and the rate at which it is moving from or towards the observer. The rate of its thwart motion cannot of course be inferred from the spectroscopic observations directly, yet indirectly it can. For the rate of motion at any given distance from the sun for an orbit of known dimensions is known; now the distance of the comet being partly indicated by the spectroscopic observations, the thwart motion is known within the same degree of error. Hence, combining this with our more precise knowledge of the motion of recession or approach, we make a first rather rough approximation to the real motion, both in direction and in amount—which would determine the orbit absolutely. Observations made a day or two later will show whether the body really is moving in this orbit; and if the later observations include spectroscopic ones we shall obtain means of testing and correcting the first estimate of the orbit which will practically give us the orbit correctly—much more correctly, at any rate, than it can be deduced by the methods at present in use from observations made on four or five different occasions.*

* Theoretically the orbit of a comet can be deduced from three observations; but practically many observations are required to give anything like accuracy.

It may be well, perhaps, in conclusion, to inquire how the comet will actually be absorbed by the sun—a fate which we may consider to be assuredly in store for it before many years, perhaps before many months, are past.

First, then, be it noticed that *at present* there is no tendency towards a diminution of the perihelion distance of the comet, as many seem to imagine. The point of nearest approach will remain nearly at the same distance from the sun, at each return of the comet, so long as the orbit remains eccentric. Only when the velocity in perihelion (or at the point of nearest approach) is so reduced that the centrifugal tendency no longer balances the centripetal force, will there be any approach towards the sun. This amounts to saying that until the orbit is transformed into a circle (when there will be no perihelion at all) there will be no approach towards the sun. When that transformation is effected, there will be approach at every part of the circuit—in other words, the course of the comet will become a spiral, the coils of which will draw closer and closer in towards the sun's surface : the sun will be within the coils, but the comet itself will be in the toils, and its end not far off. As throughout this approach the comet's substance will be in the form of vapour, there will probably be a rapidly increasing resistance, and hence a rapidly increasing rate of approach towards the sun. Oddly enough, the comet's rate of travelling will be increased notwithstanding this constant resistance, the sun's indrawing action adding more motion than the frictional resistance subtracts. For several days, probably, the comet in each circuit, when off the solar disc, will be a conspicuous object to spectroscopists, though not perhaps visible in the telescope. The comet will appear outside of the sun's disc, first on one side, then on the other, at intervals of about $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours— $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours being the time of circuit of a body close to the sun's surface. As this surface is carried round once in about twenty-five hours, there will be considerable loss of velocity, and resulting heat, in the substance of each part of the comet as it is absorbed. But I believe the whole heat of the sun would be little increased if the whole of the comet were thus absorbed at once; and very little indeed if, as is certain, the absorption take place piecemeal.

RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

A Corner of Devon.

It is a laudable rule which prescribes to preachers the choice of a single definite text as a peg whereon to hang their learned expositions and moral exhortations. The very existence of the text serves to check the evil habit of inordinate wandering from the subject, at least up to a certain point, which point it must be admitted the majority of preachers practically fix for themselves in a liberal spirit of the broadest comprehensiveness. Seeing, therefore, that it is well to talk as far as possible about one thing at a time, I am going this morning to set a text before myself with the most rigid limitations, and not to travel an inch beyond its boundaries (save by way of analogy or illustration) on any pretext whatsoever. The subject of my dissertation shall be sundry rivers, hills, towns, and villages in the southern half of Devonshire ; to wit, all that portion of the county which lies between the fiftieth parallel of latitude on the north and the English Channel on the south. I am thus geographically correct in the delimitation of my boundaries, because I have laid my text bodily before me on my desk in the shape of a small local map ; and I have mentally determined to speak of no town or feature which is not marked on that map in large type, in order that we may not be led away into the discussion of minute facts about unimportant places, but may keep our eyes steadily fixed on the larger elements of the county, with whose names even the intelligent stranger may be reasonably supposed to possess a superficial acquaintance. Through such selected towns and villages in South Devon I here propose to conduct a philological expedition, to which all the readers of this magazine are hereby invited, without further formalities of any sort.

The first point about the Devonian names to which we must turn our attention is the original or fixed element of the main geographical features. It may seem strange on a hasty glance that the rivers and hills of a country should have received names while the habitations of man were still nameless ; yet such is undoubtedly the fact, and a little consideration will make it clear why it should be so. To the primitive savage, wandering wild in woods like the Australian black-fellow or the American Indian, the rivers and hills are permanent objects, while the hut and the wigwam are changeable and temporary. Thus in the very earliest ages the everlasting hills and the ceaseless rivers got themselves names at the hands of men ; and when permanent settlements began to spring up on the slopes or in the valleys, they were usually called after the most conspicuous natural objects in their immediate neighbour-

hood. It is only modern civilised man who, with the innate vulgarity begotten of civilisation, invents ready-made names for his new towns in the bush or the backwoods—Cincinnati or Denver City, Jeffersonville or Madison Landing; and even he sometimes falls back upon the older local nomenclature of the aboriginal savage, calling Ottawa after its rushing river, Winnipeg after its frozen lake, or wild Oswego after the swamps around. But he sets out with the developed idea of a town and of a town name already firmly fixed in his stereotyped brain, and he manufactures out of his own ill-furnished head what tasteless monstrosity he can after the analogy of the familiar forms he has known in the “old country” before he crossed the intervening sea. The primitive savage and the slowly progressive barbarian, however, come at their local nomenclature by a very different process. They start with the descriptive words naturally applied to certain physical features—Red Hill or Big Water, Fontaine qui Bouille or Roche Percée (to quote the best and nearest modern analogues)—and after this central object they call their little villages, as soon as villages first begin to be. Hence, the fundamental fact in all local nomenclature is the names of hills and rivers; and these names often go back to an absolutely unfathomable antiquity, being quite meaningless in any language of which a single isolated fragment now remains to us.

In Southern Devon, this primitive stratum of place names is represented by the names of all the hills and rivers, some of which can be explained by means of the Celtic dialects, while others bear no meaning at all in any known tongue, but descend to us in all probability from those earlier neolithic inhabitants, whose polished stone weapons are still picked up among the camps of the Axe valley, and whose barrows and cromlechs still thickly stud the bare wind-swept summits of Dartmoor and Haldon. The principal rivers in this district are the Exe, the Teign, the Dart, and the Tamar; the minor streams are the Axe, the Coly, the Sid, the Otter, the Bovey, the Avon, the Erme, the Yealm, the Plym, and the Tavy, all of which flow southward; while on the north we get the Taw and a tributary of the Torridge, to wit, the Okement. These names form the nucleus of the local nomenclature in South Devon, and upon them all the later town names are ultimately based. As to the hills, though their titles are equally ancient, they have entered but little into the urban life of the county, and so the consideration of their derivatives may well be postponed till we have considered those of the main rivers.

Only two settlements in Devonshire are known with certainty to have existed in the days of the Romans, and those two are Exeter and Tamerton. Both still retain their ancient names in slightly altered forms. The river which we now know as the Exe bore on Cymric lips the title of *Isc*; that is to say, “the water.” The word is the same as the familiar Irish *uisge*, which we all know in usquebaugh and whisky, two names (or rather two forms of one name) which are exactly equivalent

in meaning to eau-de-vie. In its purest modern shape the word *Isc*, applied to many different rivers in various parts of Britain, now survives as the *Esk* and the *Usk*. But just as on west-country tongues *ash* still becomes *ax*,* so *Isc* has often become *Exe*, *Axe*, and *Uxe*, besides affording the first half of a name to Oxford and Uxbridge. Well, the station on the *Isc*, a Celtic trading town on a *dun* overhanging the tidal head of navigation, was naturally known to the Romans as *Isca Damnoniorum*; and when in the slow western advance of the English colonists a small body of West Saxon settlers occupied *Isca* side by side with its native Welsh inhabitants, they called their new conquest *Exan-ceaster*. Thence, by a gradual declension which I have already traced, the name passed into *Execestre* and *Exeter*. As late as the days of Athelstan, the town still consisted of two distinct and independent burghs, an English quarter on the south, a Welsh one on the north; and the churches in the two parts are even yet dedicated (as Mr. Green points out) to Roman and Celtic saints respectively. Athelstan reduced the Welsh town to complete subjection; but the population of Exeter must always have retained a large Cymric element; while Cornish Welsh was still spoken sparsely in remote parts of the South Hams—the region between Dartmoor and the sea—as late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

As to the second Roman station, Tamara, it took shape on English lips as Tamarton, now Tamerton. Concerning this place, I shall have a little more to say under another aspect hereafter.

The *Exe*, however, has given rise to many other names besides that of Exeter. Close by the city, *Exwick* overhangs the river's brink. A little further down its banks, a perpendicular tower, close to the railway line, marks the mediæval survivor of that old English church from which the village takes its title of *Exminster*. On the spit of land where it falls into the sea, we get the *Exam-mutha* of the English Chronicle, now the fashionable modern watering-place of *Exmouth*. These are probably the three oldest settlements in the *Exe* valley, after Exeter itself; but in process of time, as men began to push up country among the downs and forests in the rear, they came at last to the great range of hills in which the river takes its rise; and to this they gave the name of *Exmoor*, which clearly shows the nature of the route whereby they arrived at its rearing slopes of heather-clad slate. The highest ford on the river bears the natural title of *Exford*, and a little lower down on its course lies the pretty village of *Exbridge*. Not far off is *Exton*, while minor hamlets all around are variously compounded in other fashions with the river name.

The tributary streams have equally contributed to the later village nomenclature of the county. The chief town on the *Culm* is still *Cullompton*, just as an *elm* is still an *ellum* in Devonian dialect; while

* In fact, this is the classical form in the Anglo-Saxon of King Alfred and his successors.

higher up its dale lies Culmstock, the termination being the same as that which elsewhere takes the form of Stoke, meaning nothing more than the very indefinite sense of "place." Uffculm, hard by, joins to the river name a last faint memorial of its forgotten early English lord, some Uffa or Offa now unknown, "caret quia vate sacro." On the little Clyst, again, we get a whole host of petty villages, any of which may represent the Glistun of the Chronicle—Clist Hydon, St. Lawrence Clist, Broad Clist, Honiton Clist, St. Mary Clist, and St. George Clist. Finally, on the Credy, we have Crediton, locally called Kurton, the oldest seat of the Devonian bishopric, concerning which the "vates sacer" has not been silent, for he sings in true west-country dialect, with more vigour than historical correctness,

Kurton was a market town
When Exon was a fuzzy down.

Not to prove tedious in my enumeration, I shall shortly lump together sundry of the other river towns in this corner of the county under a single brief list. On the Axe we have Axminster and Axmouth; on the Coly, Colyton and Colyford; on the [Sid, Sidbury, Sidford, and Sidmouth; on the Otter, Ottery St. Mary, Up-Ottery, Ven Ottery, and Otterton; on the Teign, Teignmouth, King's Teignnton, Bishop's Teignnton, Drewsteignton, and Teigngrace; and on the Dart, Dartmouth. In all these cases, and in many more, the only ancient element is the river name, and all the other parts are of quite comparatively modern origin. I shall proceed to show this by a consideration of their various elements.

The simplest forms of these words are those which merely take the river name, with a termination like ton or stock. Such are Otterton, Colyton, Plymton, Yealmpton, Crediton, Culmstock, Tavistock, and Plymstock. I have very little doubt that these are mere rough Anglicisations of Cymric forms equivalent to Welsh Llans or Tres. So I suspect the Axmouths, Teignmouths, and Exmouths are the analogues of Welsh Abers. In every case these simplest forms are also those of the oldest and most important towns. Ottery, again, contains the same termination as all the islands round the English coast, and means the Isle on the Otter: perhaps it represents a Welsh *Ynys*.^{*} The burys and minsters are equally transparent; but the present names of the latter type can of course date no further back in time than the churches and monasteries on which they are based.

This leads us up to a second point of some importance. Originally,

* It is possible, however, that the original name of the river was Ottery, not Otter: certainly a neighbouring stream is known to this day either as Yart or as Yarty. The termination *y* or *vy* is very common in Devonian rivers, as in Tavy, Meavy, Bovey, Credy, Coly, and Woolly. Doubtless it represents the Welsh *gwy*, water, which we get as the name of the river Wye; and therefore a stream might alternatively be called either Otter or Ottery, Yart or Yarty.

I believe, at least in this land of hills and glens, men lived for the most part in scattered homesteads, and described themselves as belonging to Teign or Dart, just as in Scotland they still describe themselves as belonging to Strathspey or to Deeside. In old documents, events are said to happen, not at Lyme or Charmouth, but at the Lym and at the Char. In process of time, however, the population thickened. The river names being then common, more or less, to all the villages along each valley, it became necessary to distinguish them from one another by descriptive affixes or suffixes. In the Domesday for Devon there are three Credys, four Teigns, four Darts, eight Clists, and thirteen Otterys, which it was needful to discriminate by such means. Sometimes this was done by the mere form of the termination, as in Cul-lompton and Culmstock, Plympton and Plymstock, Teignton and Teignmouth; but oftener it was managed by one of two plans, the earlier by adding the name of the saint to whom the church is dedicated, the later (and for the most part subsequent to the Norman Conquest) by adding the surname of the family who held the manor. A few examples of each mode will help to show the really gradual growth of our local nomenclature.

The earliest method of ecclesiastical differentiation is that which simply puts the saint's name without any honorific prefix whatsoever. Thus on the Tavy, above Tavistock, we get Mary Tavy and Peter Tavy, respectively dedicated to St. Mary and St. Peter. A little later, however, the more respectful form of St. Lawrence Clist, St. George Clist, and St. Mary Clist came into fashion; while Norman usage afterwards transferred the saint's name to the end of the compound title, as in Ottery St. Mary, which was thus distinguished from the two other isles on the Otter, Ven Ottery, and Up-Ottery. Sometimes we have historical evidence of the change: for example, St. Neots, in Cornwall, was once known as Neotstow. Along the main rivers, these church-towns generally take the river name; but as settlements were pushed back into the uplands, and new churches founded there, the later villages often bore the saint's name alone without any other suffix save some word signifying place or hamlet. Thus we get St. Mary Church, near Torquay; St. Budeaux, near Plymouth; and St. Leonards, near Exeter. Early forms of this type, without the prefix, are Marystow, Bridestow, Virginstow, and Jacobstow, where *stow* is simply the old English word for place; while German's Week is the wick of St. Germanus, and Stoke Gabriel similarly keeps up the memory of the second among the archangels. Churchstow is yet more indefinite in form; while Christow is not, as one might imagine, the equivalent of St. Saviour's, but really recalls the dedication of its church to St. Christina. In Down St. Mary, we get the old British *dun*, in its regular Anglicised form, with the saint's name attached Norman fashion. St. Giles on the Heath tells its own tale in modern English. Whitechurch is also equally transparent. In all these cases, it is hardly needful to point out that the existing nomen-

clature could only have arisen after the first church was built in each of the respective villages.

The differentiation by means of the person or family who once owned the manor is equally common, and most of the great Devonshire houses are thus commemorated to the present day. On the Teign, for example, we get not only Kingsteignton and Bishop's Teignton (where the Bishops of Exeter had once a palace), but Teigngrace, which recalls the family of Graas, and Drewsteignton, which was owned under Henry II. by one Drogo or Drew. To begin, as is fitting, with the highest dignitaries first, among royal manors were Kingskerswell (distinguished from Abbott's Kerswell), King's Tamerton, and Kingsteignton; while the earls of Devon owned Plympton Earl (thus distinguished from Plympton St. Mary). The numerous Newtons, all of them on their very faces recent towns, were known as Newton Abbott, the property of Torre Abbey; Newton Bushell, Newton Ferrers, and Newton St. Cyres. The same great house which gave its name to one of these places reappears at Churston Ferrers, near Brixham. The most famous of all Devonian families, the Courtenays, turn up at Sampford Courtenay, so called by way of distinction from Sampford Spiney in the south. The Traceys, one of whom was among the murderers of Thomas à Becket, have left their name to Bovey Tracey on the little river Bovey, where the church (erected as an expiatory offering) is still dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury. North Bovey and Bovey Heathfield are the other places from which it had to be discriminated. Nymet Tracey, on the stream of the Nymet, also keeps their memory green in another part of the county. The Mohuns have left their title to Mohun's Ottery, and in a more corrupt form to Tor Moham. Tamerton Folliot, Sydenham Damarel, Berry Pomeroy, and Bramford Speke, are similar instances in the same district. Canonteign takes the first half of its name from the Black Canons of Merton Priory, who acquired it in the thirteenth century. About Cheriton Bishop and Stoke Canon I cannot speak so confidently. Sometimes, too, the names were Latinised for legal purposes, as in Buckland Monachorum, the seat of the great abbey, so called in contradistinction to Buckland-in-the-Moor, Egg Buckland, and Buckland Tout Saints, the last an obviously Norman dedication. Zeal Monachorum is another similar case, while Monk Oakhampton tells the same story in an English dress. The parts of these words which seem as yet uncertain will be mostly explained under later headings.

It is clear that by far the larger portion of the names here considered are directly dependent upon the old Celtic or pre-Celtic river-names; and that whenever we get away from the rivers, the nomenclature begins to bear a much more modern appearance. In some cases, however, the etymological connection with the river is somewhat more obscure, and requires a little passing explanation. Thus one of the streams which flows through the South Hams bears the common Celtic title of Avon; that is to say, the *afon* or river. Upon its banks stands

the village of Awton Giffard, as people now pronounce it; but the official spelling Aveton helps us back to the original Avontun or Avonton; that is to say, Avontown. The Giffards, a well-known Devonian stock, were long lords of the manor. A more curious instance is that of Oakhampton, whose form suggests at once the analogy of Oakham in Rutland, which is certainly the town in the oak forest. But Oakhampton stands on the river Okement; and in some unpublished manumissions of serfs, entered on the fly-leaves of Bishop Leofric's missal, I find the earliest form of the town name is Ocmund-tun, that is to say, the town on the Okement. Oddly enough, while the official form has been corrupted into Oakhampton, the word on the lips of the country people has become Ockington, evidently a change due to the commonness of clan-villages bearing analogous titles. Monk Oakhampton has in like manner turned incongruously into Monk Ockington.

This instance leads on to the consideration of certain others more or less similar, where the etymology originally referred to the river, but has become obscured with the lapse of time. Torrington is a case in point. It stands on the river Torridge, but it now looks fallaciously like a colony of Teutonic Thorings or Thyrings. In the South Hams, two still more interesting instances may be found. High above the Dart stands a village called Dartington, and in the valley of the Erme lies one called Ermington. Here I am inclined to suppose that the earliest English settlers did really call themselves Dartingas and Earmingas, and that the villages were named immediately after the tribes, and only indirectly after the river. Leamington in Warwickshire similarly stands on the river Leam, and there are other like cases elsewhere. It would be difficult to say whether these are true clan-settlements, or mere corruptions like Huntingdon, which was once Huntandun, and Abingdon, which was once Abbandun. Tavistock is called Tafingstoe in the "English Chronicle," as though it belonged to a tribe of Tavings; but the modern form has reasserted its true derivation from the river Tavy.

I must interpolate here, though a little out of logical order, some notice of the other real or apparent clan-settlements in this part of the county. Cockington, near Torquay, I have no doubt was a genuine colony of English Cockings. East and West Allington, near Kingsbridge, seem equally true settlements of the Allings. About Ashprington I am less certain; while Stokingham is far more likely to be a mere corruption. Shillingford St. George, however, has a good English ring about it; and so have Ilsington and Bickington in the Teign valley district. All these I take to be true old English settlements—little colonies of intrusive West Saxons, pitched here and there in the upper dales among the lands of the West Welsh or Damnonians. I am inclined to believe, too, that Honiton, a name which has much puzzled antiquaries, ultimately belongs to the same class. On the lips of the country people, as I have often observed, it is always Honington (or, to

be perfectly candid, Unnington), and it may very well once have been the primitive *tun* of the English Honingas. The change in this case would be quite analogous to that which has made Glæstingabyrig into Glastonbury, or Bensington into Benson. If so, I suppose Honiton Clist must be another settlement of the same Honingas on the river Clist, thus distinguished on the one hand from Honiton proper, and on the other hand from all the neighbouring Clists, St. Mary's, or St. George's.

To return once more to our rivers, there are yet other ways in which they have given rise to various local names. Besides Lidford on the little Lid, and Lewtrenchard on the Lew Water, we get the Taw giving origin not only to North Tawton and South Tawton, but also to Taw Head, as the name of the hill on which it takes its rise.* So the Dart supplies a title for Dartmoor as a whole, and for the hill known as Dart Head in particular. Again, the promontory between the estuary of the Teign and the sea, ending in the Ness opposite Teignmouth (ness being equivalent to nose, to the Naze, to Orford Ness, and to the last syllable in Cape Grisnez and Blancnez) is known as Teignhead ; and a nestling combe among the red hills here finds a name for Combe-in-Teignhead, while a Stoke in the same district is known as Stoke-in-Teignhead. Indeed, some distinction is positively necessary to mark off one Stoke from another in this neighbourhood ; for we have also Stoke Fleming (it passed from the Flemings to the Mohuns and Careys), Stoke Gabriel, Stoke Damarel, and at least half a dozen more assorted Stokes and Stocks. Even little Dawlish, that trim and artificial modern watering-place among the bright red cliffs near Teignmouth, traces its name to a Celtic river ; for in the record of Bishop Leofric's gift of the manor to the church of Exeter it is spelt Doflisc, the last syllable being clearly the same as Isca and Isca. But the Dawlish Water (as we now call it) is so short a stream that no other village has arisen on its banks, so that no distinctive termination has ever been added, and we get the name in the same form as Bovey or Tavy must have had before they were differentiated into Bovey Tracey and North Bovey, or into Mary Tavy, Peter Tavy, and Tavistock. On the other hand, even the tiny valley of the Lym has had to be divided into Lyme Regis and Uplyme.

Before we pass away from the rivers, a word must be said about the name of Plymouth. This case admirably illustrates the way in which mere descriptive titles grow at last into proper names. In Domesday Book mention is made of three small hamlets on this site, known as Sutton ; that is to say, South Town. One was called Sutton Prior ; the two others were a brace of King's Suttons. In process of time, the last-named passed from the Crown to new lords as Sutton Ralf and

* The name properly applies to the fountain-head only, but in practical use it has come to be applied to the hill as well.

Sutton Valletort. Gradually the first of the trio got to be known as Sutton-juxta-Plym-mouth ; until in the fifteenth century an Act of Parliament abolished the former name, and gave the rising port its modern title of Plymouth. Devonport is a still more recent innovation. It was known as Plymouth Dock till 1824, when the existing name was conferred upon it by Act of Parliament.

Another very ancient element in the place names of Devon is afforded by the hills and rocks of the uplands. Most of these are locally known as Tors, a Celtic word which recurs in two other very imperfectly Teutonised regions—at Glastonbury Tor in Somerset, and at Mam Tor in Derbyshire. Two isolated Tors in the more cultivable part of the county have given names to villages or towns. One is a fine broken mass of rock near Ashburton, in the parish of Tor Bryan, held by the Bryans from the days of Henry II. to those of Richard II. The other, a more famous one, is the rugged mound on the Newton Abbott road at Torquay, crowned by a ruined chapel of St. Michael, the archangel who loves such peaked and airy stations.* From this peak, the monastery at its base took the name of Tor Abbey, or, as it is now most irrationally spelt by tawdry modern vulgarisers, Torre ; while the adjoining manor was known as Tor Mohun, corrupted with the course of time into Tor Moham. The blue bay in front became Torbay ; and when a little quay was built in its securest corner, the new harbour was known as Torquay. Here, once more, as in the case of the rivers, all that is essential or fundamental in the names is the Celtic root Tor : the rest is nothing more than late mediæval or modern addition.

Even more ancient, perhaps, than the word Tor itself are the words with which it is conjoined in the names of the Dartmoor hills. There are people who think they can assign a meaning to Yes Tor and Mis Tor, to Cosdon and Crockern, to Hessary and Hamildon. As a rule, indeed, the less they know about philology and about Dartmoor, the more confident are they as to the correctness of their conjectural etymologies. But sober-minded inquirers, who are not content with mere baseless guessing, but consider that it is desirable to have a little evidence before deciding upon a verdict, do not find it so easy to analyse or account for these extremely ancient and primitive names. A very few of them are probably English in their first element ; for example, Hey Tor is probably the high tor, or, to spell it in the older fashion, Heah Tor. A few more are possibly Welsh : for example, Hessary may perhaps just conceivably have something to do with the dimly-known Celtic deity, Hesus, and Mis Tor may perhaps be remotely connected with the equally uncertain Misor, the moon-god ; though these

* In all the most Celtic districts of France and England, by the way, St. Michael is a great favourite. His churches are perched on the summits of many a sheer Auvergnat *puy*, as well as on the well-known pyramidal mounts near Dol and Penzance.

derivations certainly smack of a justly discredited school which used to talk with much learned ignorance about the details of an unknown and very problematical Druidical worship. But the greater part must be set down, like the original river names, to a suspense account, as words whose etymology cannot yet be satisfactorily recovered. They may be neolithic, they may be British, they may even be English; but the only safe thing to say about them is that nobody really knows anything at all upon the subject.

Nevertheless, the names of this early type have themselves helped to enter into the composition of other local names; and the hills which bear them have played no small part in the early history of the county. Mr. Gomme has shown that all the old hundred courts and shire moots of England were originally held in the open air; and most of them were held either at some sacred tree—the shire oak, say, or the hoar apple tree—or else at some monolithic monument, or again at some great barrow, or finally on the top of some high and conspicuous hill. Hey Tor itself thus gives the name to a Hundred; and the hundred court was long held upon its twin crests of solid granite. At Crockern Tor, the stannary parliament of Devonshire used to meet, as that of Cornwall met at Hingston Down, the Hengestesdun of the "English Chronicle," where Ecgberht the West Saxon put to flight the independent Cornishmen in a famous battle. The assembled stannators sat in rude state on rough granite seats, long since removed to Prince Hall, and now ruthlessly destroyed, apparently for road metal. The village of Sheepstor takes its present corrupt name from a great hill in its rear, with a cavern still haunted by the native pixies; whatever the first syllable means, it does not mean sheep, for it is always found in connection with very barren and rocky heights. Buckland-in-the-Moor, Widecombe-in-the-Moor, and Moreton Hampstead are called rather after the moor as a whole, not after any one of its component undulations. Torcross, Bramble Torr, and other like names may be left for the judicious reader to decipher easily on his own account.

There is a still older crop of town names, however, than those of the river valleys—a class belonging originally to the very ancient hill-forts, many of which are now quite deserted, while the sites of others are only occupied by ruined castles or petty modern hamlets. Some of these towns date back to an immemorial neolithic antiquity; others probably descend to us from the historical Damnonian Britons. They are marked for the most part by the occurrence in their names of the root *burg* or *bury*, which means originally a mound or earthwork. In modern times, this root has differentiated itself (as Mr. Herbert Spencer would say) into two forms: one, which appears as Barrow or Berg, meaning a hill or height; the other, which appears as Burg, Burgh, Bury, and Borough, meaning rather a town or city. But in their origin, the two forms are one and the same. The root notion appears to be that of earthwork. Now a pile of earth may be an artificial tumulus or

Barrow ; it may be a natural hill or Berg ; it may gird round a fortress or Bury ; or it may guard a trading town or Borough. Whether the idea of high place or of digging is the more primitive it would be hard to say ; for all barrows, all buries, all forts, and all earthworks were originally perched on the tops of hills ; but, as in most other cases, we may take it for granted that the artificial objects gained a name first, and that the name was afterwards extended to the natural eminences. For man always finds the earliest words to designate the products of his own handicraft : he made bows before he named the rainbow, and he dug burgs before he named the iceberg. The old English forms of the word are generally *burh*, genitive *byryg* for a town, and *beorg* for a hill. These forms will readily account for the various modifications which the words have undergone in various English and Lowland Scotch dialects.

The form Borough, applied to a hill, or natural height, occurs but rarely in England, as at Ingleborough in the Pennine range, and again at Flamborough in Yorkshire, and at Crowborough in Sussex. But in these last two cases, the application of the word seems so curious to modern Englishmen that they have altered the names to Flamborough Head and Crowborough Beacon, while the original words themselves are now taken to indicate the modern villages of Flamborough and Crowborough, which have grown up at their bases. This, as we shall see hereafter, is exactly analogous to what has happened with the Devonshire Burgs. An isolated barrow near Lynton is still known as Symonsborough, and said to cover the body of a king called Symon. Other forms of the root are found at Barrow-in-Furness, and at Barrow Hill, near Bath, a natural oolitic height, which closely resembles an artificial tumulus. At Bury in Lancashire, and at Bury St. Edmunds, we get the more strictly urban variation, which reappears as a termination in Canterbury, Aylesbury, Banbury, and Sudbury. Gainsborough and Scarborough show rather the north-eastern or strictly Anglian type. In Scotland, they still adhere more closely to the ancient spelling and pronunciation in Roxburgh, Jedburgh, Edinburgh, and Musselburgh. Which of these were originally hill-forts, and which were mere boroughs, it would be difficult in every case to decide : for my own part, like the undergraduate who was asked to name the minor prophets, I decline to make invidious distinctions.

Now, in Devonshire, there is a remarkable series of such burys, all of them old hill-fortresses, sometimes now quite deserted, and sometimes overhanging a modern village of the same name. These names are all of a very ancient type, and very few of them can be fairly explained by means of English roots. They consist, apparently, of an ancient name, followed by the formative English suffix, *burh*. Among the unoccupied sites are Prestonbury, a great hill-fort crowning a heath-clad slope beside the Teign at Fingle Bridge ; Hembury, a huge agger overhanging the grounds of Buckfast Abbey ; a second Hembury among the hills in the

rear of Honiton ; and Woodbury, on the downs back of Newton Poppleford (so called from its pebbly ford, for pebbles are still always popples in Devon, and these particular pebbles are geologically famous, as well as objects of curiosity from their oval shape). But when a village has afterwards grown up under the shadow of the hill-fort, as at Musbury, Membury, Sidbury, Cadbury, and many other Devonian Burys, the original application of the words to the deserted forts has been wholly forgotten, and the villages now bear the simple name, while the forts are known as Musbury Castle, Membury Castle, Sidbury Castle, and so forth. To the best of my knowledge, however, there is not a single Bury in our present district of Devonshire which does not stand immediately below a large and conspicuous prehistoric earthwork ; though at Modbury and Bigbury the traces left of the old fortifications are extremely slight. Ugborough, on the other hand, owes its name apparently to the great hill behind it, which is no doubt the original Borough, though it is now known as Ugborough Beacon. The root form is probably Celtic (or at least not English), since it reappears as a river name in Ugbrook. All these old hill-forts, of course, belong naturally to a far earlier age than the valley towns : they represent the days when each tribe of dalesmen had its own camp of refuge on the summit of the downs, whither all the women and cattle were driven in case of hostile invasion from the next glen beyond the border. The English settlers apparently took the old names in their entirety, simply adding to them the English termination Bury, instead of the Welsh affixes, Caer and Dinas.

The word Bury is now practically pronounced Berry, and in Devonshire it is often written so as well. Thus the great shining promontory whose tall cliffs bound the blue expanse of Torbay to southward is capped by a Roman camp, on the site of a still earlier British earth-work, and it is known as Berry Head, a name exactly equivalent to Pendennis in Cornwall ; for Pen-dinas also means the castle headland. On the summit of Dartmoor itself, an ancient pound or piece of cyclopean masonry bears the analogous name of Berry Pound. And on a precipitous height near the vale of the Dart at Totnes, rises a mound which must long have passed by the simple title of Berry ; a place chosen for a fort by the earliest autochthones, and ever afterwards crowned by a stockaded village, a Norman castle, or a Tudor mansion. From the great Norman house of the Pomeroyes it took its full modern name of Berry Pomeroy, though it was their successors, the Seymours, who raised the vast pile which still spreads its ivy-bound ruins over the summit of the precipitous slope. Warberry Hill at Torquay preserves the same local form of the word : its analogues elsewhere are always spelt Warbury.

If we review the whole of these Devonian names in our minds as here set forth, it is quite clear that they fall naturally into two great classes. One class dates from before the English Conquest, and includes all the

main natural features, the Exe and the Teign, the Tors and the Duns, besides all the older hill villages, the Memburys and Musburys, and all the known Roman stations, the Exeters and Tamertons, the Duriums and the Moridunums. In every case, these have still retained under more or less altered guises their original names. The other class dates later than the English Conquest, and consists partly of what we may fairly consider mere translations from the Cornish Welsh, such as Mary Tavy and St. Petrox; partly of specialised forms from the old river names, such as Plympton and Dartmouth; partly of purely modern names, such as Kingswear and Devonport. In every case, whatever is demonstrably old is Celtic or pre-Celtic; while conversely whatever is English is demonstrably new, and for the most part very new indeed.

In two previous papers I have endeavoured to show that all the old names in Britain were not destroyed at the English Conquest, as is commonly asserted, but lived on uninterruptedly till the present day. In this paper I have attempted to prove the obverse fact, that the English element in the local nomenclature does not really date from the earliest period of English Conquest, but is part of a slow growth, mostly in the distinctly Mediæval period. The local nomenclature was not wholly changed by the Teutonic settlers, as is so often thoughtlessly asserted: on the contrary, it was not even appreciably altered. A few new terminations were added, a few old forms were phonetically corrupted, a few transparent words were naïvely translated, and that was all. The truly English names grew up later, and they grew up just in proportion as new settlements were projected into the great waste of the forest-clad or heath-covered uplands. They are unknown in the old Celtic or Roman stations; they are fairly common in the upper valleys of the rivers; they are almost universal in the outlying downs. Yet there is still scarcely a single village name in Devonshire which does not contain for its chief distinctive and fundamental element a Celtic river root.

Again, I have chosen Devonshire for this illustrative purpose, because it is universally admitted even by the most fire-eating Teutonists of them all that the Devonian population remains to the present day mainly Welsh by race. But the Devonian nomenclature is just as English as that of any other English shire—no more so and no less. Therefore, it does not at all follow that because the local nomenclature of Kent and Norfolk is equally English, all the ancient Britons in the eastern belt were eaten alive by that redoubtable friend of Mr. Freeman, the omo-phagous Teutonic colonist. Everywhere over England the same results show themselves on a careful scrutiny. All the old towns, all the rivers, all the hills retain their Celtic or Romanised names: all the newer villages bear purely English names, or else names compounded of a Celtic root with a formative English termination. But if we compare the local nomenclature of Devon with that of Cornwall, we shall see at once the true *rationale* of this peculiarity. In Cornwall there are plenty of Anglicised names like Falmouth and Callington, St. Germans and

Padstow, Launceston and Grampound; but the mass of the smaller villages are known by truly Celtic titles such as Landewednack and Polperro, Trecarrel and Pengelly, Porthleven and Lostwithiel. The reason for the difference is obvious: in Devonshire, the Cymric tongue died out rapidly, so that English was the only language spoken in the greater part of the county when most of its villages first grew up: in Cornwall, the native dialect lingered on up to the last century, so that almost every place had a fixed name of its own long before English became the spoken language of the county at all. Even there, however, the Anglicising tendency is fully seen in the modern form given to many old names like St. Ives and Wadebridge, the Dead Man and the Merry Maidens, Helston and St. Michael's Mount; while the railway system has covered the map with English New Quays, Bodmin Roads, and Victorias, which in the course of ages may grow to oust the Penryns and Mevagisseys of the older language. But to say that the English conquest of Britain totally changed the names of places throughout all England, on the strength of the comparatively late Tons and Worths and Bridges, is as unhistorical as to say that Athelstan's subjugation of Cornwall gave rise to the names of Wenford Bridge or Scorrier Gate. The truth is, the more we examine the underlying stratum of English place names, the more do we see that their permanent and ultimate elements are all Celtic, while only their formative or very modern elements are in any way Teutonic or English.

A Gaelic Helen.

I THINK it may be useful, or at least curious, to make a critical examination of the character of the heroine of one of the old Gaelic legends. These tales have long been known to the British—or at least to the Anglo-Irish—public, in fragments all more or less disfigured by false taste, bad translation, detestable imitations of the brogue, and unwarrantable interpolations supposed to be comic. Many of them have lately been made accessible to English readers in a work of a very different character—Mr. Joyce's *Old Celtic Romances*, in which an attempt has been made—and, upon the whole, not unsuccessfully—to convey the spirit of the Gaelic originals in simple but classical English. But, so far as I am aware, there has been as yet little serious endeavour to treat the heroes of these tales critically, or to examine the characters portrayed as if they were the personages of a modern work of history or fiction.

The tale whose heroine I select for this purpose is the story of Diarmuid and Grainne. It has been printed, with a faithful literal translation and notes, by that distinguished Irish scholar, Mr. S. H. O'Grady, in the "Transactions of the Ossianic Society;" and his text and translation have recently been published in an uncommonly cheap form by the "Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language." The reader will therefore be in a position to check my assertions, and test the value of my inferences.

All my quotations will be made from Mr. O'Grady's admirable translation.

The fame of Grainne and of Diarmuid is over the two Gaelic countries. Wherever in Ireland or in Scotland the Gaelic language is still spoken, there the story of the two lovers is remembered, and their adventures related in the winter evenings by the fireside.

In this respect, indeed, as Mr. O'Grady has well pointed out, the mythic and semi-historical legends of ancient Erin have the advantage over the more recent traditions. Of these latter the fame is now merely local, and, so to say, anecdotal. With the appearance of the English upon the scene, the solidarity of the Gaelic races seems to have been dissolved. The O'Briens are, indeed, remembered in Clare, and the O'Donnells in Donegal, and the Butlers and Fitzgeralds in Leinster. But who speaks now of the conflicts of these worthies out of their own districts? On the other hand, where is there an Irish-speaking peasant who has not heard tell of Fionn Mac Chumhaill, and Oisín, and Oscar, and Diarmuid, and the other heroes of the Fenian tales?

Unfortunately, however, though these personages and their exploits

are well and universally remembered, there is no such general agreement as to the places where those exploits were performed. Each tribe seems to have been anxious to associate with its own mountains and valleys and streams the doughty deeds of these favourite heroes. As the anonymous author of that pleasantly learned book, *Loch Etive, and the Sons of Uisnach*, says, "no story is more persistently told than the story of Diarmuid; no story has the places connected with every transaction more minutely given; but, unfortunately, some half-dozen places claim the originals."

According to Irish tradition, and the Irish manuscripts—of which, however, there are no copies now known to exist of date later than the eighteenth century—all the adventures, with one exception, took place in Ireland. Diarmuid was a native either of Kerry or of Leinster; the place of his death was Beann Gulbain (now Ben Bulbin in Sligo); he was buried on the banks of the Boyne: and to this day, in many parts of Ireland, the ancient cromlechs (by some supposed to have been altars or places of sacrifice, but by O'Curry unhesitatingly pronounced to be merely tombs) are wont to be called by the peasantry, "Leabaca Dhiarmuda agus Ghrainne," "beds of Diarmuid and Grainne," and are supposed to have been the resting-place of the lovers.

On the other hand, Scotch tradition—which, however, is quite unsupported by manuscript testimony—would have the adventures of this romantic pair take place in some part (it is by no means settled what part) of Scotland. There is a Ben Gulbain in Perthshire, whose claim to have witnessed the death of Diarmuid is vouched for by the oldest inhabitant. In Argyll there is another Ben Gulbain, equally well recommended; and, what is more, there is in the latter county, at the upper end of Lochnell, a tall stone pillar ("one of the finest in Scotland," says the author whom I have last quoted), which goes by the name of "Diarmuid's pillar," and under which the hero is locally believed to lie buried.

The truth is that these old stories are not the property of either Scotland or Ireland in particular; they belong to the whole Gaelic race. Our geographical conception of nationality is very modern. The names "Irishman" and "Scotchman" are merely newspaper terms, of convenient use in political and theological controversy. There was a time, be it remembered, when there was no John Knox, and when John Bull himself was merely an awful possibility of the future, vaguely contemplated by certain amorous Low Dutchmen, who were coming to think that even Welsh wives would be better than no wives at all. In those days, and long after, there were neither "Irishmen" nor "Scotchmen." In their place were the "Gaedhel of Eire and of Alba." These were, in their own opinion at least, one people, broken up into a thousand clans. Unhappily they are one people no longer. Opposed systems of piety and of politics, with a marked difference of accents, and a notable distinction in whiskies, have put bad blood between the two branches of "the sea-divided Gael."

The story of Diarmuid and Grainne—in common with the other Fenian tales and poems—is undoubtedly of great antiquity. It relates to a time anterior to the introduction of Christianity. How long it may have passed—as it passes now—from sire to son by oral tradition, and when it was first written down, are questions which it is now impossible to answer. As I have already stated, no ancient copies of it are known to exist. But it is one of the 187 stories mentioned in the *Book of Leinster*, the oldest with one exception—viz.—*Book of the Dun Cow*—of the Gaelic manuscripts which we now possess.

It will be observed that I write "Diarmuid" and "Grainne," and, when I have had to employ a phrase which involves the use of the inflected case, "Dhiarmuda" and "Ghrainne."

The fact is, that "Diarmuid" and "Grainne" are the names of these lovers. This is how they are written in Gaelic. The English reader must please himself as to how he will pronounce them. Hitherto, for his supposed accommodation (but I don't think it helped him much), it has been the custom to corrupt these and all other Irish names in ways as various as they are absurd. Diarmuid has been set to half a dozen spellings for the Saxon ear. Sometimes he appears as *Dermat*, sometimes as *Dermod*, sometimes as *Dirmid*. The modern National School Diarmuid of Kerry or Donegal goes a step further in his desire to ingratiate himself with his conquerors, and is wont invariably, when speaking English, to designate himself either as *Darby* or as *Jeremiah*. Grainne, in like manner, goes into English society under many disguises. Mr. Joyce speaks of her as "Grania," and she is often to be seen under the still more uncouth appearance of "Grawnya." Nowadays, when using the English tongue, she generally calls herself "Grace," in defiance of all etymology.

Grainne ni Mhaille, the Connaught princess who visited Queen Elizabeth, after having borne many a grotesque alias—as, for example, "Grania Uaile," "Grany i Mallye"—appears at length to have settled down comfortably in history as "Grace O'Malley."* Fionn Mac Chumhaill is usually known as Finn Macool. Mr. Joyce translates him, curtails him, teaches him to drop his *h*'s, and turns him out, "Finn, the son of Cumal." Macpherson crushes him into "Fingal," and expands his famous son "Oisín" into "Ossian." I protest against the practice altogether. Are we to turn "Napoléon" into "Nappolayong," or Anglicise him "Napier" or "Nathaniel," in order to popularise the account of the battle of Waterloo? It may be true enough that if you write a Gaelic name as it is written in Gaelic, no Englishman is likely to pronounce it correctly. But what of that? How many Englishmen can pronounce "Richelieu"?

* The very curious subject of the metamorphoses and so-called "translations" of Irish personal names has been treated at length by me in an article which appeared in the *Month* magazine for November 1881.

Having made these necessary observations, let me now introduce the lady whom I have kept waiting so long.

Grainne, the daughter of Cormac,* the son of Art, the son of Conn of the Hundred Battles, may well be described as the Helen of Ancient Erin, or at least as one of the Helens.

To speak of Fionn's sixteen years' "pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne" in the same breath as the siege of Troy may indeed be to compare small things with great. The charms of Grainne, though doubtless as irresistible, were, it must be admitted, somewhat less baleful in their effects than those of her Greek prototype. To Grainne it was not given to set two nations by the ears. Her bright eyes did execution only upon her own countrymen. Still in a small, and so to speak domestic, way, she wrought about as much mischief as any lady, going into love with a light heart, could reasonably desire; causing a good deal of blood to flow, and sending the souls of many brave men to Hades. A notable woman of her kind, evidently; yet her kind is not uncommon. We all know the pretty, petty, sensitive, capricious, strongly emotional, but really heartless woman, whose end there is no possibility of foretelling, who is just as likely to make a great match as a great scandal, and die a duchess, or a castaway, or both. Such, in my humble judgment, was Grainne. Such, however, is not the opinion of her which the reader will form from Mr. Joyce's version of the tale in *Old Celtic Romances*. But Mr. Joyce, if I may venture to say so, in his graceful paraphrase has been more concerned to tell a pretty story than to follow the Irish text that lay before him. He interpolates a good deal of matter in the way of comment, reflection, and excuse, for which I can find no justification; and he rejects altogether, for reasons which he considers sufficient, the concluding chapter of the story as usually told, which chapter is certainly not to Grainne's credit.

Let me relate now how Grainne came to be the wife of Diarmuid, and what followed, so far as is necessary to enable the reader to form an estimate of the lady's character.

Well, then, we are told that when that famous warrior, Fionn Mac Chumhaill, commander of the Fenian Militia of Erin, was well stricken in years, he had the misfortune to lose his wife. In his loneliness he complained to his son Oisín, the father of Oscar, and to Diorraing, one of his friends.

"And what forceth thee to be thus?" asks Oisín; "for there is not a wife nor a mate in the green-landed island Erin, upon whom thou mightest turn the light of thine eyes, or thy sight, whom we would not bring by fair means or foul to thee."

Hereupon Diorraing † says that he thinks he knows of a lady that might suit.

* Cormac, according to the Irish annals, reigned from 213 to 253 A.D.

† Mr. Joyce calls him Dering. See the evils of the pernicious system of cooking Irish names for the English market. There is a Kentish family of Derings, baronets, never connected with Fenianism ancient or modern.

"Who is she ?"

"She is Grainne, the daughter of Cormac, the son of Art, the son of Conn of the Hundred Battles," quoth Diorraing; "that is the woman that is fairest of feature and form and speech of the women of the globe together."

Now it so happened that there was a feud between the families of Cormac and Fionn. Hence Fionn did not like to urge his suit in person until he had some reason to think it would be accepted. Accordingly he asked Oisín and Diorraing to go as his ambassadors to Cormac. "I could better bear a refusal given to you than to myself," said the old man.

Oisín and Diorraing therefore set out for Teamhair (now Tara), where King Cormac was holding his court. When Cormac had been made acquainted with the object of their coming, "he spoke, and it is this he said : 'There is not a son of a king, or of a great prince, or of a hero, or a battle-champion, in Erin, to whom my daughter has not given refusal of marriage, and it is on me that all and every one lay the reproach of that ; and I will not certify you any tidings, until you betake yourselves before my daughter, for it is better that ye get her own tidings, than that ye be displeased with me.'"

They proceeded accordingly to the bower of the women, and "Cormac sat him upon the side of the couch by Grainne, and said : 'Here are, O Grainne, two of the people of Fionn Mac Chumhaill coming to ask thee as wife and as mate for him, and what answer wouldest thou give them ?'"

Grainne replies dutifully, but apparently without giving much attention to the matter : "If he be a fitting son-in-law for thee, why should not he be a fitting husband and mate for me ?"

To reconcile this answer with the lady's subsequent behaviour, we must assume that at this time Grainne had never seen Fionn. This is not merely quite possible, but extremely probable. There was, as has already been said, feud between the two families. That the fame of a warrior so renowned as was Fionn must have reached her in some form or other, is of course certain. But at no time have young ladies taken much interest in contemporary public affairs, and it is in the highest degree likely that Grainne may have had but a very vague idea of what manner of man Fionn was.

The messengers, having been treated royally by Cormac, return to Fionn and acquaint him with the success of their embassy, and bid him and his followers to feast at Teamhair a fortnight hence, when the contract between him and Cormac is to be ratified.

Accordingly, on the appointed day, Fionn and all the Fenians arrive at Teamhair, and there a great banquet is spread for them in the "king's mirthful house, called Miodhchuarta," where the "King of Erin sat down to enjoy drinking and pleasure with his wife at his left shoulder, and Grainne at her shoulder, and Fionn Mac Chumhaill at the king's

right hand," and the rest of the company, "each according to his rank and patrimony, from that down."

Now, near Grainne, there sat a "Druid and a skilful man," to wit, "Daire of the Poems;" and he "sang to her the songs and the verses and the sweet poems of her fathers and of her ancestors," and "it was not long before there arose gentle talking and mutual discourse between himself and Grainne."

The lady, it is clear, cared more for gossip than for poetry and genealogy; and, having now seen Fionn, she was by no means pleased with her hasty engagement to marry him.

"Tis a great marvel to me," said she to her neighbour, "that it is not for Oisín that Fionn asks me, for it were fitter to give me such as he, than a man that is older than my father."

"Say not that," said the Druid; "for were Fionn to hear thee, he himself would not have thee, neither would Oisín dare to take thee."

Turning gracefully from so dangerous a topic, the lady began next to inquire the names of the assembled guests.

"Tell me, now," says she to Daire, "who is the warrior at the right shoulder of Oisín the son of Fionn?"

"Yonder," said the Druid, "is Goll Mac Morna, the active, the warlike."

"Who is that warrior at the shoulder of Goll?"

"Oscar, the son of Oisín," said the Druid.

"Who is that graceful-legged man at the shoulder of Oscar?"

"Caoilte Mac Ronain," said the Druid.

"Who is that freckled, sweet-worded man with the curling, dusky-black hair and the red ruddy cheeks, upon the left hand of Oisín the son of Fionn?"

"That is Diarmuid O'Duibhne the white-toothed, of the lightsome countenance, that is the best lover of women and of maidens in the whole world."

So she goes on. Then at last she sends her handmaid for her "jewelled golden-chased goblet," which "contains the drink of nine times nine men," and in which apparently some opiate has been mixed or charm breathed. It is passed round among the company, and except Oisín and Oscar, Diarmuid and Diorraing, all drink of it; and scarcely have they done so, when they "fall into a stupor of sleep and of deep slumber."

Then Grainne arose softly and went over to Oisín, and whispered to him, "I marvel at Fionn Mac Chumhaill that he should ask such a wife, for it were fitter for him to give me my own equal to marry than a man older than my father."

"Say not so, O Grainne," quoth Oisín.

"Wilt thou receive courtship from me, O Oisín?" asked this girl of the period.

"I will not," said Oisín; "for whatever woman is betrothed to Fionn, I would not meddle with her."

Then Grainne turned her face to Diarmuid O'Duibhne, and it is this she said to him, "Wilt thou receive courtship from me, O son of O'Duibhne, since Oisín receives it not from me?"

"I will not," said Diarmuid.

"Then," said Grainne, "I put thee under magic *geasa** of danger and of destruction, if thou take me not out of this house to-night, ere Fionn and the King of Erin arise out of that sleep."

Up to this point, at any rate, I think it will be admitted that Diarmuid does not appear to have been very much taken with Grainne. "Diarmuid na m-ban" as he was called—"Diarmuid of the women"—was indeed famous as a ladies' man all over Ireland. But, though he had been accustomed to make love with some success, it was doubtless a new sensation to him to have love made to him.

"Evil bonds are those under which thou hast laid me, O woman," said he; "and wherefore hast thou laid those bonds upon me, before all the sons of kings and of high princes, in the king's mirthful house to-night, seeing that there is not, of all those, one less worthy to be loved by a woman than myself?" Then Grainne—who, it will be remembered, did not know the man by sight a few minutes ago—begins to think that she must invent something sentimental to say to him in the hope that it may provoke his ardour. She remembers that there had been some time before at Tara a hurling match, in which it was said that Diarmuid O'Duibhne had distinguished himself. So she makes this pretty speech:—

"By thy hand, O son of O'Duibhne, it is not without cause that I have laid these bonds on thee, as I will now tell thee. Of a day when the King of Erin was presiding over a great gathering and muster on the plain of Teamhair, and there arose a great hurling match between Cairbre Lifeachair and the son of Lughaidh, and the game was going against the son of Lughaidh, thou didst rise and stand, and tookest his *caman*† from the next man to thee and didst throw him to the ground, and thou wentest into the game, and didst win the goal three times upon Cairbre and the warriors of Teamhair; and I was at that time in my Grianan‡ of the clear view, gazing upon thee; and I turned the light of mine eyes and of my sight upon thee that day, and I never gave that love to any other man from that time to this, and I will not for ever."

* *Geasa*, according to Dr. O'Grady's note, were of two kinds. They might merely amount to the putting of a man upon his honour, in which case they were called "Geasa which true heroes endure not without obeying;" or, as in the case of those laid by Grainne upon Diarmuid, they might be enforced by threats of supernatural punishment.

† *Caman*, the species of crooked bat with which the game was played. "Hockey stick" as we should say now.

‡ *Grianan*, from Grian the Sun, a name originally applied to the sunny side of the house appropriated to the use of the ladies of the family—derivatively a "pleasure house," a "palace." In the corrupted Anglicised form, Grennan, it is now applied to half the ruined castles in Ireland.

It is to be conjectured that Oisín, if he heard this speech, must have been rather staggered, and must have congratulated himself upon having had the presence of mind to refuse the offer of marriage which the lady had made to him within the quarter of an hour.

But Diarmuid, strange to say, is not yet conquered.

"It is a wonder that thou shouldst give to me that love instead of to Fionn," said he, "seeing that there is not in Erin a man that is fonder of a woman than he; and knowest thou, O Grainne, that on the night that Fionn is in Teamhair, he it is that has the keys of Teamhair, and so we cannot leave the town?"

"There is a wicket-gate to my Grianan," said the eager maid.

"I am under *geasa*," said Diarmuid, driven to bay, "not to pass through any wicket-gate whatsoever."

But Grainne is not to be denied.

"Howbeit," said she, "I hear that every warrior and battle-champion can pass by the shafts of his spears, in or out, over the rampart of every fort and of every town, and I will pass out by the wicket-gate and thou follow me so."

Then Grainne went her way out, and Diarmuid took counsel with his friends what he should do. They advised him that he was bound to fulfil the *geasa* that had been laid upon him, though his death would result from it.

Then he went away, not exactly like a bridegroom to a feast, but with a tear "not bigger than a smooth crimson whortleberry" in each eye through grief at parting from his people. He went to the top of the fort, "and put the shafts of his two javelins under him, and rose with an airy, very light, exceeding high, bird-like leap, until he attained the breadth of his two soles of the beautiful grass-green earth on the plain without, and Grainne met him."

He determined to make a last effort to bring her to reason. "I trow, O Grainne," said he, "that this is an evil course upon which thou art come. It were better for thee to have Fionn Mac Chumhaill for lover than myself, since I know not what nook or corner or remote part of Erin I can take thee to now. So return again to the town, and Fionn will never learn what thou hast done."

"It is certain that I will not go back," said Grainne, "and that I will not part from thee until death part thee from me."

Here in *Old Celtic Romances* Mr. Joyce interposes with the statement that "Now at last Dermat yielded and strove no longer, and, putting off his sternness of manner and voice, spoke gently to the princess, and said, 'I will hide my thoughts from thee no more, Grania' (I venture to think he had been fairly outspoken for a polite Irishman); 'I will be thy husband, all unworthy of thee as I am, and I will guard thee and defend thee to the death against Finn and his hirelings.'"

A pretty and appropriate speech, no doubt. But neither in Mr.

O'Grady's text nor translation can I discover any evidence that Diarmuid ever made it. All I find him saying in answer to Grainne's refusal to go back is, "Then go forward, O woman," said Diarmuid."

That he had not quite "yielded" yet, or put off altogether, as Mr. Joyce would have us believe, his "sternness of manner and voice," is furthermore, I venture to think, to be inferred from what occurred a few minutes later. They had not gone but a little way from the town when dainty Grainne, like the fine lady that she was, began to feel faint. Doubtless she thought the affectation was pleasing.

"Indeed, I am weary, O son of Duibhne," said she.

"It is a good time to weary, O Grainne," replied Diarmuid; "and return now to thine own household again, for I plight the word of a true warrior that I will never carry thee nor any other woman to all eternity."

Truly a sensible, but hardly a very sentimental, utterance on the part of the gentleman.

The lady now suggests the theft of her father's horses which are feeding in a neighbouring field, and with their aid she finally succeeds in carrying off her lover.

It does not come within the scope of my intention, nor would my space permit me, to follow Diarmuid and Grainne in the adventures which they pursued for many years all over Ireland. To detail the marvellous exploits and the wonderful escapes which are set down at full length in the *Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne* would lead me far from my purpose, which is merely to portray the character of this Gaelic Helen, as I have ventured to call her.

Let it suffice to say that in all these wanderings they were hot pressed by the power and jealous rage of Fionn, who summoned all the forces at his command to effect their capture and destruction.

From these straits Diarmuid always comes out well, and Grainne, to my thinking, usually badly. He is invariably brave, chivalrous, and high-minded. She is ever full of whims and fancies (especially at times when ladies, I believe, consider themselves privileged to indulge vain longings), and her whims usually imply peril for her husband or somebody else.

For some time she has an attendant, a youth named Muadhan, whose business it is to carry her on her journeys. Poor Muadhan may be supposed to have had enough to do, for she has a knack of being "weary" at inconvenient times. But it is the spirit, not the flesh, that is weak in her. In reality, with all her airs and affectation, she is a stout, healthy lass; and when Muadhan left them, "and she considered that she had now no man to carry her but Diarmuid, she took heart and began to walk boldly by Diarmuid's side."

Except in the matter of refusing to carry her, in which doubtless he is influenced by a proper sense of marital dignity, Diarmuid never denies her anything. Though he was undoubtedly in the first instance (let

Mr. Joyce gloss over the matter as he pleases) carried off by her against his will and better judgment, her charms soon appear to have acquired over him an influence such as female charms of a certain sort, if history is to be trusted, have ever been wont to acquire over the hearts of heroes. A hero he was unquestionably, of the noblest type—brave, even to recklessness, mighty in battle, terrible to his enemies, kind and considerate to his friends, tender and loving to his wife. When he is hard beset in the palisade of Doire dha bhoth by Fionn and all the power of the Fenians, he will not make his escape by the carelessly kept door which is nominally guarded by his old friends Oisín and Oscar, though they call to him to do so, and that they will look another way. "No," says he, "I will not, for I will not cause Fionn to be angry with you for well-doing to myself." He chooses for his escape the other door in front of which is his bitter enemy Fionn with four hundred hirelings, who call out to him "We bear thee no love, and if thou wilt come out to us we will cleave thy bones asunder." "I pledge my word," says he, "it is by this door I will go out."

So in regard to his treatment of his wife. Danger is the breath of life to him, but she is never allowed to encounter peril. When foes compass them around, his first thought is always for Grainne; and his friend Aonghus of the Boyne, the famous sorcerer, is at once summoned to carry her off—rendered insensible by magical means—to a place of safety. But for himself he trusts to his two spears, the *Ga dearg* and the *Ga buidhe*, and to his swords, the *Moraltach* and the *Beagaltach*. Such a thorough gentleman is he that when, at Grainne's request and to gratify an absurd whim of hers, he encounters and slays the Searbhan Lochlannach, the terrible giant who guards the berries of the Quicken tree of Dubhros, he hurriedly hides the monster's mangled body under the brushwood of the forest so that Grainne may not see it.

This incident of the berries of Dubhros is so characteristic of the disposition of the two lovers, but especially of Grainne, that I must notice it at greater length. These berries of the Quicken tree of Dubhros are indeed wonderful berries. "There is in every berry of them the exhilaration of wine and the satisfying of old mead, and whoever shall eat three berries of them, has he completed a hundred years he will return to the age of thirty years." They are guarded by the Searbhan Lochlannach, "a giant hideous and foul to behold," who "cannot be slain until three terrible strokes be struck upon him of an iron club that he has, and that club is thus—it has a thick ring of iron through its end and round the giant's body."

Now it so happened that Cumhall, the father of Fionn, had been slain in battle by one Goll Mac Morna. Afterwards come the children of Morna—three doughty warriors—to Fionn, seeking peace. "I will not grant ye peace," said Fionn, "till ye give me *Eric* for my father." "What *Eric*?" say they. "Either the head of Diarmuid O'Duibhna, or a handful of the berries of the Quicken tree of Dubhros," replies

Fionn. The children of Morna accordingly go off to Diarmuid and explain to him that either he must get them a handful of the berries, or be prepared to fight for his head.

Diarmuid declares that to get the berries is impossible for anybody, and that he, especially, would be the last to make the attempt, since the giant has treated him very well, and given him leave to hunt in his district. But he goes on to say that although, for these reasons, unwilling to meddle with the giant, he is quite willing to tackle the three children of Morna; and accordingly he does tackle them with his bare hands, and, after a desperate combat, conquers and binds the three of them.

Grainne has been present all this time. She has full notice that to get the berries of the Quicken tree of Dubhros is no trifle. So she turns to Diarmuid and says, "I shall not live if I taste not those berries. I vow that I will never lie in thy bed unless I get a portion of them."

Well, Diarmuid is a lover and a hero; so he goes forth to meet the Searbhan Lochlannach. He finds the monster sleeping, but he is far too noble to take him at such disadvantage. He dealt him a stroke of his foot, so that the giant raised his head and gazed at Diarmuid. "Is it that thou wouldest fain break peace, O son of O'Duibhne?" "I may not do thee treachery," replied Diarmuid; "but Grainne, the daughter of Cormac, has conceived a desire for those berries which thou hast; therefore I now tell thee it is to seek them by fair means or foul that I am come upon this visit."

Then a terrific combat ensues; till at last Diarmuid, wrenching the club from the ring which fastens it round the giant's body, "strikes three mighty strokes upon him, so that he dashes his brains out through the openings of his head and of his ears, and leaves him dead without life."

Then when the corpse—a sight so likely to offend delicate female nerves—has been hid away, Grainne is sent for. "There, O Grainne," says he, "are the berries thou didst ask for, and do thou thyself pluck of them whatever pleases thee." But Grainne—sweet creature—knows the value of a little coquetry. "I swear," says she, "that I will not taste a single berry of them but the berry that thy hand shall pluck, O Diarmuid."

At length, after countless perils encountered and escaped, Diarmuid, by the aid of his friend Aonghus of the Boyne, the Druid, and Cormac, the father of Grainne, patches up a peace with Fionn.

And Cormac gives his other daughter, Ailbe, "for wife and mate to Fionn, that he may let Diarmuid be;" and Diarmuid takes Grainne to live at Rath-Ghrainne, in what is now the county of Sligo, and they dwell there a long time in peace without thought of Fionn. Grainne bears to Diarmuid four sons and a daughter; and it is said "that there is not living at the same time with him a man richer in gold and silver, in kine and sheep, and who makes more Preys than Diarmuid."

Fionn is entertained royally by them at a great feast, and bygones are suffered to be bygones.

But Fionn, though he dissembles his malice, still bears enmity to Diarmuid. Aware that Diarmuid is under "Druidical restrictions not to hunt pig," he engages him in the chase of the wild boar of Beann Gulbain, and throws him in the way of the savage beast. Diarmuid kills the boar, but at the same time receives frightful injuries.

Now it is Fionn's special privilege that "to whomsoever he shall give a drink of water from the palms of his hands, that man shall be sound from any sickness."

Diarmuid bethinks him of this, and asks Fionn for the drink, conjuring him by the memory of the long years they spent in friendship, and the many occasions in past times he has perilled his life in Fionn's cause.

Fionn refuses again and again, till his followers all cry shame on him. At last he goes to the well, but he lets the water slip through his fingers. He goes back again to the well, but before he can return Diarmuid dies.*

Then Fionn and his people go to break the news to Grainne; and we are told that "when Grainne was certified of the death of Diarmuid, she uttered a long, exceedingly piteous cry, so that it was heard in the distant parts of the Rath," and her women came about her. "And truly my very heart is grieved," said she to them, "that I am not myself able to fight with Fionn, for, were it so, I would not have suffered him to leave this place in safety." Then she sends for her children who are out at fosterage. "O dear children," says she to them, "your father has been slain by Fionn Mac Chumhaill, against his bonds and covenants, and avenge ye that upon him well." And she bids them go into distant countries "and learn carefully all practice of bravery and of valour till they shall have reached their full strength," that they may be in a condition to make war successfully upon Fionn.

When Fionn hears this, he considers within his own mind that he must "soothe Grainne." "So he got him to Rath-Ghrainne, and greeted her craftily and cunningly, and with sweet words. Grainne neither heeded nor hearkened to him, but told him to leave her sight, and straightway assailed him with her keen, very sharp pointed tongue. However, Fionn left not plying her with sweet words and with gentle, loving discourse, until he brought her to his will." She accepted him after all, her noble husband's murderer, her sister's spouse, the "man older than her father."

* Mr. Joyce makes the tale end with the death of Diarmuid. The sequel which is to be found in all the Irish versions, he rejects for critical reasons which I do not profess myself competent to appreciate. He thinks that this continuation was patched on to the original story by some unskilful hand. All I can say is, if it be an addition it is an addition made by some one who had formed an extremely correct estimate of the character of Grainne.

Such was Grainne. A hero like Diarmuid was the natural prey of such a creature. From the days of Samson to those of Lord Nelson has not valour ever been led captive by a wanton? The better the man the worse the woman, seems to be the rule in these matters.

The story of Grainne is related simply, and without note or comment, by the old Irish Seanchaidhe, whoever he was. He stops neither to blame nor to excuse her. He just tells the tale as it was told to him.

But from the beginning to the end, in all she says and does, this heroine is thoroughly consistent and thoroughly contemptible.

I have thought her character worth examining, not indeed because it is either uncommon or attractive, but because it proves one of two things—either Grainne was a real woman, or the old Irish storytellers possessed more power of observation and more literary skill than they are commonly given credit for.

Becky Sharp is not more true to herself or to nature than is Grainne.

A Roman Penny-a-liner in the Eighteenth Century.

MANY eloquently graphic descriptions of the greatness of the difference between the English life of the middle of the last century and that of the present day are familiar to us; but enormous and striking as that difference is, it is unquestionably less than the difference which exists between the old Papal Rome of the Clements and the Benedictis and the Rome of Humbert I., by the grace of God and the national will King of Italy. And it may be said at the same time that the life of the old Papal city during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is much less well known to English readers than either the time preceding those centuries, which was still shining with the glories of the Renaissance, or the time subsequent to the French Revolution, which was commended to the attention of Europe by its peculiar share in the consequences of that cataclysm. Yet it was a singularly interesting time too. Death-beds are to the thoughtful student of humanity more interesting than cradles; and the death which, slow, peaceful, and unperceived (till the short sharp convulsion of the last agony), was stealing over so much that made the everyday environment, presents to the clinical student of social systems a singular number of curious and interesting dissolving views from the magic lantern of history.

"History" perhaps is too great a word for the occasion. But the humble chronicler, the memoir writer, the diarist, the preserver of *ricordi* (a specially large class in Italy), have their magic lanterns too; and the views they present are often as vividly coloured, as quaint, and as interesting as any that Mnemosyne in her highest heeled buskin has to offer. A by-way—a blind alley rather—more remote from the beaten historic highway than the story of the vicissitudes of a hapless penny-a-liner—very accurately so called—could hardly perhaps be imagined. And now the reader shall judge whether such a story does not justify the claim that has just been advanced on behalf of such by-ways.

In 1736 Clement XII., the Florentine Corsini, was Pope. We hear much of the omnipresence of the police—the famous *birri*—of those days; and under so perfect and order-loving a despotism as that of the Pontiffs it might be thought that not a mouse could stir in Rome without the permission of the *Bargello*—the head of the police—and his men. The fact is, however, on the contrary, that popular tumults were of very common occurrence in the Eternal City. And one arose in the above-mentioned year which gave no little trouble to the authorities, and the origin of which is itself a curious illustration of the times. Spain and France were at that time allied in war against the German Empire, and

the Spanish Governor of Naples was called upon to do his utmost to furnish his masters with recruits, which the Spanish army greatly needed. Not succeeding in obtaining as many as he needed within the Neapolitan frontier, he sent agents to Rome to pick up idlers in the taverns and *piaze* there. It would seem, however, that the recruiting agents, not likely to be very scrupulous observers of legality, supplemented in some cases persuasion by force. At all events it became believed in Rome that Romans were being kidnapped to be smuggled across the frontier into Naples. Less than such a suspicion would have sufficed to excite the not very calm or law-abiding population of Rome to frenzy. In the twinkling of an eye the city was up in arms, and a vast and furious mob was rushing through the streets in pursuit of the recruiting agents, or indeed, as is the manner of popular justice, of any Spaniard on whom they could lay hands. And it would have gone hard with any one recognised to belong to that nationality had he fallen into the hands of the furious Roman populace. But on the first symptom of the popular rising not only the guilty agents, but all the Spaniards whose position in any way exposed them to the fury of the rioters, rushed for protection either to the Palazzo Farnese or to the palace of the Spanish ambassador in the Piazza di Spagna. The number of the rioters is said to have been between five and six thousand, and it is worthy of notice that they are stated to have been mostly Trasteverini, or inhabitants of the right bank of the river, on which the Vatican and St. Peter's are situated.

This tumult occurred on March 13, 1736.

And especially by reason of the European political situation, which rendered the Pope's position a somewhat difficult one—the only desire of the Apostolic Court being to preserve a perfect neutrality between the contending parties and to keep out of the trouble—this tumult, which seemed to be, or at least was capable of being represented as, an act of hostility against Spain, caused the Papal Government much disquietude and uneasiness. But the riot of March 13 was destined to lead to further and more serious consequences. A Neapolitan contingent of three thousand men, marching northwards to join the Spanish forces, passed by Velletri, where news reached them of the attack on their fellow subjects in Rome; whereupon, on pretext of avenging that injury, they attacked the men of Velletri and attempted to sack that city. But they met with a stouter resistance than they had anticipated, and they were beaten off after severe fighting, in which many lives were lost on both sides. As soon as the tidings of this little battle reached Rome, Cardinal Aquaviva, the ambassador from Naples, demanded signal reparation for the insult offered to Spain. Of course the Spanish ambassador supported him, and they pushed their pretensions so far as actually to demand that the Roman Senate should repair in person to Madrid to beg for pardon. Pope Clement was blind, eighty-five years old, and extremely desirous of keeping himself and his city out of the fray. But this Spanish insolence fired the old Corsini blood. The Pope replied that

Rome was not wont to brook humiliation, and forthwith sent away the Spanish and Neapolitan ministers and recalled his nuncio from Madrid and from Naples.

In this state of things it may be readily imagined how eagerly the excited Roman world looked out for the morning papers. But there were no papers, either morning or evening. The publication of news, in its infancy even in the foremost capitals, was absolutely non-existent in Rome. The Papal Government, strongly impressed by the fact that "silence is golden," had at all times a special dislike to be talked about. But, with the usual perversity of human nature, the more difficult it was to learn what was going on, the more anxious and curious people were to hear. And to do so, though very difficult, was not impossible. News was provided in those days in Rome for those who could pay for it. And the modes in which, and the circumstances under which, it was provided are so curious, and form so special a chapter of the history of that time and clime, that it is worth while to spend a few words on the explanation of them.

There may be seen, even at the present day, in one or two of the remoter parts of Rome, in spots where the scantiness of the traffic or the irregularity of the buildings affords a little quiet space, a small assemblage of some four or five little tables, at each of which is seated a generally black-coated and always singularly seedy-looking individual, with pens and ink on the table before him. These men earn a sufficiently miserable livelihood by writing for those who are unable to do so for themselves—love-letters, or the replies to them; begging letters for the impostors who live by them; petitions from all sorts of the poor-devil category of humanity to all sorts of persons, for all sorts of things; and the like. These scribes are the latest lingering representatives of the once flourishing offices of the copyists, one of the manifold occupations of which was the production of the *avvisi*, or advice-sheets, which, at the period of which I am speaking, supplied the place of newspapers to the curious gossips of Rome. The trade was in those days a good one. In a city constituted as Rome was, a larger part of the population consisted, as will be readily understood, of entirely idle persons than in any other community in the world. And the desire for and consumption of "news" was great in proportion. All classes purchased these *avvisi*, from the secretary of a cardinal to the barber, part of whose business was to amuse his customers with the chat of the day. But it must be understood that the whole of this flourishing business was highly illegal, and all the stages of the traffic were clandestine. If a stranger entered the well-known shop of one of these *copisti*, and asked for a sheet of news of the day, or for this or that piece of news which had already become known, the master of the establishment would have replied that he knew nothing whatever of anything of the sort; that he had heard that such a paper had been seen in the city, but had no idea whence it had proceeded; that he, for his part, never meddled with such

matters ; that he copied any writing for anybody who brought him anything to copy ; never asked any questions, and never knew anything further of the matter. The real truth, however, was not only that he was in the daily habit of selling the *avvisi* in question to those whom he knew to be safe customers, but that he kept the composers of such sheets in his pay. It will be very readily understood that the profits of this by no means otherwise than lucrative clandestine trade were not at all equally divided between the writers of these news-sheets and the *copista* in whose office they were multiplied, and who disposed of them with the requisite caution to the public. Of course the latter absorbed by far the larger share of the proceeds, and the hapless penny-a-liners who worked for him were, for the most part, very literally such.

Now, illegal as the whole trade was, and though it would at no time have been safe to neglect the precautions that have been described, the Government, for the most part, gave itself very little trouble about the matter in normal times. The *avvisi* were everywhere. They were seen in the studies of cardinals, in the alcoves of princesses, on the wine-stained tables of the taverns. Nobody knew whence they came, and nobody asked any indiscreet questions on the subject.

The time, however, to which we have been referring was not a normal time. The riot of March 13, 1736, and the consequences which had resulted from it, had placed the Apostolic Government in a position of great perplexity and difficulty ; and it was felt that the relations of the news-writers on the subject, and, still worse, their commentaries on the subsequent events, might contribute to embroil his Holiness with foreign governments. The matter was therefore unusually serious.

But as it must be a very ill wind which blows nobody at all any good, the trouble of the Apostolic Court was the news-writer's opportunity. Of course a thousand rumours were rife as to the incidents of the tumult, and yet more as to the measures taken and likely to be taken by the Government. Never had there been remembered such a demand for *avvisi* ; and it is needless to say that in this case at least the supply was equal to the demand. All the pens of all the news-writers were busy ; and very specially busy was that of one, perhaps at that time the foremost and ablest of the confraternity.

The Conte or Abate Enrico Trivelli—for he was sometimes called by the one title and sometimes by the other—had a better right to the first than to the second appellation. His grandfather had been valet to the Marchese del Vasto, and had followed that nobleman with great fidelity when he, as a partisan of the Empire, and consequently an enemy of Spain, had been exiled from his Neapolitan home and compelled to seek refuge in the dominions of the Emperor. There he had obtained from the Emperor for his favourite and faithful follower a patent of nobility which made him a Hungarian count. The title duly descended to his son, and to his son's eldest son, our Conte Enrico. He was born at Naples in 1709, but was educated at Vasto, in the king-

dom of Naples, where his family possessed some property, and where he gave proofs of having profited to the utmost by the instructions of his clerical teachers. He founded there a branch of the Academy of Arcadia when he was only twenty-one years old; and in 1730, on the elevation of Clement XII. to the Chair of St. Peter, he published verses in honour of the new Pontiff. Probably these literary successes were the cause of his migration to Naples shortly afterwards. There he was frequently called the Abate Trivelli; not that he had ever received even minor orders, but because it was the fashion of the time for those who affected literary pursuits to assume the ecclesiastical habit and title.

At Naples the poetaster Abate soon dissipated his modest patrimony, and then, after the universal fashion of the literary adventurers of that day, betook himself to Rome in quest of employment and fortune. At first his appearance in the streets and literary resorts and lounges of the Eternal City was that of a gay and smart young Abate, whose poetical pretensions and reputation secured him a welcome among the *littérateurs* of the day. The *Custos* of Arcadia was at that time the Abate Lorenzini, who was a member of the household of Cardinal Borghese. The Abate Trivelli became intimate with him, obtained by his means the *entrée* to several houses of the Roman ecclesiastical and lay aristocracy, and was often seen at "Arcadia" and in other resorts of the literary world. But all this while the small remains of the funds which the gay young Abate had brought with him from Naples were rapidly verging towards exhaustion. He was all this time seeking to attach himself to the "service," as it was called, of some great lay or ecclesiastical patron. In what capacity? it may be asked. What service was he fitted to render? Absolutely none. He was good for nothing save to write bad verses. But, as things were in the world around him, there was neither folly nor presumption in his supposing that this need be no impediment whatever in his quest. All the great houses of the Roman world, whether those of the cardinals or of the Roman princes, most of them the descendants of the relatives of popes or cardinals, harboured a larger or smaller number of absolutely useless parasites, who were termed "gentlemen in the service of" this or the other grandee. In times a little previous to those of which we are speaking such persons were expected to be ready to use their swords in the service of their patron. In the eighteenth century it was a recommendation if they could do as much with their pens. And this the Abate Trivelli could do. Nevertheless nothing but disappointment awaited him. Great as was the number of berths for useless idletionians, the number of members of that class who aspired to fill them was greater still. And our poor Abate could find nothing. Absolute want was before him. By rapid degrees the smart and dandified Abate became shabbier and shabbier. Ecclesiastical garments of the last degree of seediness were common enough in Rome; but such were not seen in cardinals' palaces. Poor Trivelli was no longer able to show himself in the houses he had been in the

habit of frequenting. All hopes of becoming anybody's "gentleman" were at an end, and he was in imminent danger of starvation. Something he must do, and that at once.

The respectable and well-to-do citizen Signor Martino Dominici, the scrivener, as we should say, or copyist, as they said at Rome, was at home superintending his clerks in his well-known establishment in the Campo Marzio, when a very seedy and half-starved-looking young man presented himself in the office, desiring to speak with Signor Dominici.

Now, well-to-do as the scrivener was, and highly respectable as was his place of business, it did so happen that not unfrequently similarly seedy and out-at-elbows-looking individuals, generally in more or less distinctively ecclesiastical costume, had occasion to see him on business; and though the occasion here spoken of was the first on which Signor Martino Dominici and poor Abate Trivelli had met, the latter was at once asked to step into the scrivener's sanctum, behind the public office.

It is needless to occupy space unnecessarily by an attempt to give dramatically the dialogue that ensued, to which would of course be wanting the absolute truthfulness which belongs to the facts which have been and are about to be narrated. Suffice it to say that after the due amount of protestation on the part of the respectable Signor Dominici to the effect that he knew nothing about the contents of the writings brought to his place of business to be copied—that, as for *avvisi*, he never meddled with anything of the sort—the half-starved Abate found the means of persuading the scrivener that he might, at all events in this matter, be trusted, and the two men soon understood each other.

This occurred shortly after the tumult of March 13, 1736, and the producers and sellers of *avvisi* had reaped a good harvest from the highly excited curiosity of the public. But it was evident that the orange was not squeezed dry yet. After the *Descrizione del Tumulo* there was a *Ragionamento Morale* about the tumult, and then a *Lettera Critica* on the same subject. And there is no doubt that both the latter were by the pen of the indigent Conte Abate Trivelli.

A "Description of the Tumult"! Well, seeing that the facts were patent enough, and that the *Descrizione* said no more than the truth, the Papal Government did not pay much attention to that. But a "Moral Consideration" of the affair and a "Critical Letter" on the subject was a different matter and roused the authorities. There was considerable danger, as has been pointed out, that the Apostolic Court might get into serious trouble with some foreign government; and when you came to moral considerations and critical letters it seemed exceedingly probable that this danger might be increased.

So the Cardinal Neri Maria Corsini, the nephew of the Pope, who was at the head of the Government, sent for the Governor of Rome, Monsignor Marcellino Gorio, and very significantly recommended to him a greater degree of vigilance in the matter of the clandestine and illegal

production and sale of news-sheets, observing, further, that the abuse had risen to intolerable proportions, that the writers dared to meddle with matters of State, and that it was necessary to make an example.

The Governor understood that it behoved him to be active and find the means of putting a stop to the *avvisi* in some way or other. So he forthwith sent for the Bargello—a name of fear in old Rome. The Bargello was the head of the police; and as the business of keeping things quiet and preventing crime and irregularities from protruding themselves too prominently before holy eyes was carried on without any troublesome reference to forms of law, the power of the Bargello and the terror inspired by him were considerable. And the Governor said to the Bargello much the same as the Cardinal had said to him, adding that it was absolutely necessary that the writer of these productions should be discovered, and that he need spare no money for the purpose of doing so. The Bargello promised with the utmost confidence that the names of the writers should be in Monsignore's hands before many days should have passed. "And, by the bye," added the Governor as the Bargello was leaving him, "his Eminence wishes in the meantime to see all the writings that appear on the subject." "Monsignore shall be obeyed," said the Bargello and bowed himself out.

That formidable functionary returned to the dread high quarters of his office, where he lived surrounded by the *birri*, his myrmidons, for whom his word, let that word be what it might, was law; and summoning one of these ministers without the loss of so much as a minute, he bade him go to the Campo Marzio and tell Signor Dominici that he wanted to speak with him at his office for a minute. "But," says the reader, "I thought that the whole manufacture and the traffic in these *avvisi* was clandestine and a profound secret from the authorities." Those who understand more of Italian ways, and especially of those ways in the olden time, will comprehend perfectly well that most clandestine things in Rome were perfectly well known to the Bargello, and that it by no means followed that the law should be put in motion or any public notice be taken of them.

A sudden cold fit struck Signor Dominici's heart on hearing the message brought by the *birro*, and, despite his recognised respectability, an expression passed over his face which induced the *birro*, who understood his business, to say in a careless manner that he fancied Signor Dominici was wanted to copy some ancient writings, of which work he knew there was plenty on hand.

Somewhat reassured, the respectable Signor Dominici arranged his full-bottomed wig, took his three-cornered hat from its peg and his ivory-topped cane in his hand, and set forth on his walk to the central police office. Arrived there, he was at once shown in with all show of respect to the private cabinet of the Bargello.

That officer received him in the most friendly manner. Of course on the first mention of the business in hand the worthy scrivener pro-

tested that he knew nothing about *avvisi* or any such matters. It was his business to copy what was brought him to be copied, and he did so. At least it was done in his office—often without his ever having seen either original or copy. No questions were asked. It constantly occurred that he had no knowledge whatever of the names of the persons who brought MSS. to be copied; very often, indeed, never saw their faces again.

To all which the Bargello replied in the most friendly fashion that of course he knew very well that Signor Dominici had nothing to do with the production or dissemination of scurrilous writings; that were it not so he should not be talking with him then and there in the manner he was; but that the Government was desirous of having an opportunity of seeing the writings in question, and that it had occurred to him that Signor Dominici, being, as he notoriously was, a faithful and well-disposed servant of the Holy See, might from the nature of his business be able to render service to the Government in this matter.

The Bargello proceeded to touch lightly upon the desire of his Eminence Corsini, the Cardinal Nephew, to be made acquainted with the names of the composers of these papers; and, in reply to fresh protests of the scrivener that, though he was perfectly ready to bring to that office copies of any of the current pasquinades and satires that he could lay his hands on, it was utterly out of the question that he should be able to discover the names of the writers, he did not insist on this point, but merely said that if he could learn the names of any of the authors it would be all the better, but that the main thing was to bring him the papers.

"And don't suppose, my good friend," added the Bargello, "that I or the Government of the Holy Father want you to work for nothing. The workman is worthy of his hire. *Diamine!* Now, look you. For every one of those pestilent papers that you bring me I will pay you eight, nine, or ten crowns, according to the importance of it."

Eight or ten crowns for every squib that he could bring! Signor Dominici could hardly believe his ears. It seemed as if an Eldorado was opening to his eyes in endless vistas. But, though delighted, he was, like a genuine Italian, still cautious amid his exultation. And it occurred to him that it might be wise, in case any trouble should, *par impossible*, arise out of the business he was undertaking for the Bargello, to provide another head than his own on whom the thunderbolt might fall if it became a question of the falling of any such. Besides, it was evident to Signor Dominici at a glance that it would be desirable to provide for a larger supply of the wares of which the Bargello was in quest than the ordinary state of matters furnished. If squibs were to be paid eight or ten crowns apiece, it would be difficult to have too many of them.

And these considerations induced him to say, as he was leaving the Bargello's cabinet, that he thought he knew a man who might be able to

be of more use in this manner than he himself could. And in reply to the questions of that functionary, who took care not to allow any of his newly-awakened interest to appear in his manner, he mentioned the Abate Trivelli. He was employed, Signor Dominici said, as a copyist, and was very likely to have such things as the Bargello wanted passing through his hands.

"Well," said the Bargello, "let him come to me here with any of the papers in question he can lay hands on, and he shall be paid at the same rate I have promised you."

And so the two men parted on the pleasantest terms.

Dominici went immediately to look for Trivelli, and seems to have truly and straightforwardly enough repeated to him all that had passed between him and the Bargello. Trivelli was even more delighted at the prospect of earning so easily what was riches for him than the less needy scrivener had been. The two men agreed that they would work together, and go halves in the proceeds. And it was not till after Trivelli had parted from his patron and friend that a doubt as to the possible motive of Dominici in thus sharing with him gains, which apparently he might keep all for himself, seems to have suggested itself to him and caused him some disquietude. But on second thoughts he came to the conclusion that Dominici being aware that he, Trivelli, really knew more about the *avvisi* and the different manufactories of them than he did himself, had come to the conclusion that a much larger harvest might be reaped by going shares with him.

The reasoning which reassured Trivelli, however, may not perhaps seem entirely convincing to the reader, who has the entire record before him. It seems hardly likely that a man in the position of Signor Dominici should have had any difficulty in procuring copies of any or all of the papers going about Rome, and thus getting for himself all that was to be got out of the Bargello. And a consideration of the entire story has suggested to the present writer a suspicion that the Bargello's little word about discovering the writers of the papers had so frightened the worthy scrivener that he forthwith conceived the idea of providing a person to whose share this dangerous portion of the police officer's commission should fall, and who should at need serve himself as a scapegoat. Trivelli, however, on his part seems to have had no further misgivings.

But there is one other explanation of Dominici's conduct, which may be the true one. It has been said that the supply of these clandestine papers, news-sheets, satires, dialogues, epigrams, pasquinades, was sure to be equal to the demand. But if this is true it must be understood of the normal demand. The offer which the Bargello in his zeal was making would have the effect of at once creating an abnormal demand. Eight or ten crowns for every such writing! What abundance of them could suffice to satisfy the greed created by such an offer? "If there are not as many as one could wish, Trivelli can make them fast enough. And

Trivelli, I know," the scrivener may have added to himself, "has a friend who can help in the work. It is hard if the Bargello is not served to his heart's content between us. And, come what will, I am only a copyist."

The friend of Trivelli to whom Signor Dominici alluded in his mind was one Gian Battista Jacoponi, a priest who lived by his pen after the same manner as Trivelli. He was, if anything, a step lower in the social scale, and a little more deeply plunged in poverty, want, and misery, than his friend the Abate. He had, to be sure, the resource, which Trivelli had not, of earning a stray paul now and then by following a bier or saying a mass. It was not lawful for him to do this without having obtained a "*celebret*" from the ordinary, since he was not a priest of the diocese of Rome. And sometimes the *celebret* was refused to him. And sometimes he would say a mass, if he could get employed to say one, without the *celebret*, thus rendering himself liable to fines and penalties. It was the duty of the sacristan of every church not to allow a priest other than those belonging to the diocese to say mass in the church entrusted to him without the production of the *celebret*; but it would seem that poor Jacoponi sometimes found a sacristan whose compassion for his all but starving condition induced him to forget to ask for the needed document. The man was the type of a class then common enough, and not yet wholly extinct in Rome—the unbenediced, unattached pauper priest. Work of any kind was not only impossible to his physical capabilities, but forbidden to him by the laws of his caste. Alms and ecclesiastical functions so bestowed or permitted as to be of the nature of alms were indeed abundant—so abundant as to ensure the yet greater abundance of the claimants of them. How, then, was such a man as the Rev. Gian Battista Jacoponi to live? He could use a pen; and he had such an amount of superiority in native wit to the majority of his class as made it possible for him to use it mischievously and offensively. And these facts sufficiently marked out to him his career. He too was in some sort attached to the Campo Marzio "copying" establishment of Signor Martino Dominici. Not, it would seem, so exclusively attached to it as to prevent his carrying his wares elsewhere, if he could see an opening for so doing, but to such a degree as to render Signor Dominici his principal patron, and to make that worthy tolerably accurately acquainted with his doings and his whereabouts. Such was the friend and brother penny-a-liner of Trivelli on whom the scrivener counted as just the man to assist in the production of a sufficient quantity of piquant libels to satisfy the Bargello's utmost craving in that line, and to ensure a steady flow of the Holy Father's crown pieces into his own pockets.

A meeting was arranged between the Bargello, Dominici, and Trivelli; not, as is noteworthy and curious, at the great man's office, as was done in the case of the respectable scrivener, but in a secret and mysterious manner. Dominici and the Abate were told to be after nightfall at a certain remote spot in the city, and to await there the coming of the Bargello's carriage. He came very punctually, motioned them to get

into the carriage, which drove with them to the huge colonnade which encircles the Piazza of St. Peter, as solitary a spot at that hour as any in the wilderness of the Campagna. Walking in the double obscurity of that grove of gigantic columns, the three men arranged the business in hand very quickly. The Bargello was as affable as ever, and as ready with his promises of unlimited crowns. To protestations on the part of Trivelli that he, for his part, had never had any part in the composition of the productions in question, the Bargello replied that if he were not quite certain of that he should not be then and there discussing the matter with him, and then drove off, leaving them to regain their homes thoroughly well satisfied with their interview.

It does not seem that Jacoponi was ever introduced to the great man. His share of the gains consisted apparently only in having plenty of work and getting paid for it at the ordinary rate.

And for a while all went on swimmingly, and apparently to the satisfaction of all parties. Satires, imaginary dialogues, criticisms, prophecies, malignant libels in every form and on all sorts of persons, were carried to the Bargello day by day, and paid for by him with unstinted liberality. Gradually the audacity of the libellers increased, and the desire to make their wares more and more worth paying for induced them to fly at higher game. The Cardinal Neri Corsini was transported with indignation when the Governor of Rome, to whom the Bargello regularly transmitted his collection of libels, handed him one day a "Dialogue" between himself and Cardinal Coscia. The latter was a degraded and infamous man, who for swindling and other abominations had been imprisoned in St. Angelo and then exiled to Naples. No power on earth, however, can unempurple a once hatted cardinal; and Coscia came back from Naples subsequently under a safe-conduct in order that he might take part in the Conclave which assembled at the death of Clement XII. And the convict swindler did sit in it, and contributed by his vote to the election of the succeeding Vicar of Christ.

The audacity of the lampooner who dared to represent this infamous man as conversing in friendly talk and on equal terms with him, the Cardinal Nephew, was an outrage which wounded the *amour propre* of the proud and dignified Neri Corsini very deeply. But worse was yet to come. Shortly afterwards the Bargello handed to the Governor, and the Governor to the Cardinal, a shameful and scandalous attack on the honour and good name of the Princess Corsini, the Pope's niece. The Cardinal was furious. But shortly there came satires and political appreciations which yet more seriously disquieted the Cardinal and the Government of the Apostolic Court. Enough has been said at the beginning of this article to show that the then condition of Europe was such as to cause the Papal government to consider its relations with more than one foreign government critical and embarrassing; and Clement XII.'s counsellors became convinced that foreign agents were in reality prompting and inspiring the *avvisi*. The reader knows that the entire

mass of these scurrilous writings, many of them still existing in the Roman archives, exceedingly indecent, and all vilely libellous, was the produce of two or three poverty-stricken wretches writing for bread, and encouraged by the exceptional market for their production which the absurdly injudicious measures of the Government had provided. The thing had been going on now from the latter part of March to October; and the Government, becoming not only exasperated, but alarmed, were determined to strike, even at the hazard of striking amiss.

Just then Trivelli carried to the Bargello a writing entitled *Un Consiglio al Rè delle due Sicilie*. And this counsel to the King of Naples was simply hostile to the Holy See and its policy. Corsini, when he received it, doubted no longer that foreign agents were at work to produce all this mischief and disturbance. Now, the paper carried to the Bargello by Trivelli was "the first part" only of the MS. in question. The Abate was naturally careful not to sell too much of his wares for one fee. The Bargello inquired eagerly for the second part; and in a few days the second part was ready and was brought to him. The Abate received his money and was allowed to go. But when shortly after Signor Dominici came with a sonnet grievously offensive to the Papal Government, the Bargello very closely pressed him as to the authorship. The scrivener was, however, perfectly unshaken in his protestations that he knew absolutely nothing on the subject. "Only the other day," said the Bargello, "Trivelli brought me two parts of an abominably treasonable *Consiglio al Rè delle due Sicilie*. It is impossible that you should have no idea who wrote that."

"I cannot know what Trivelli does," replied Dominici, already frightened out of his wits and disposed to shift the trouble from his own shoulders to those of his friend at the earliest opportunity.

"I suppose not. Oh, of course not! At the same time, look here, my good friend, Dominici; I have been paying and paying for a good while now; and I don't mean to get nothing for my money. Come, what is Trivelli doing?"

"The Abate Trivelli is a very mysterious man."

"Humph! so he seems."

"If I go to his room he is always hiding away writings and papers in a great hurry."

"That looks bad."

"To tell the truth, the suspicion has occurred to me that he writes some of these things himself."

"With what object?"

"How can I say? I know he has relations with people in high position at Naples."

"Well," concluded the Bargello, "I have full confidence in you; and your welfare requires that it should be continued," he added with a significant look. And so the two men parted, perfectly understanding each other.

Soon after this, on October 30, the Abate Trivelli carried to the Bargello a third part of the *Consiglio al Rè delle due Sicilie*. That functionary desired him to read the MS. Trivelli complied.

"Now, who gave you the original of that document?" said the Bargello, short and sharp.

The trembling culprit replied, of course, by a string of inventions and falsehoods, naming one Constantino Grimaldi, a Neapolitan, who had no existence save in his invention.

All this time Dominici had been in an adjoining room. The Bargello called him in, and shortly told them they were both under arrest. They were at once carried off to the cells attached to the police office. But Dominici was released the same night. That same night also the priest Jacoponi and several other copyists were arrested, and their domiciles searched. Little or nothing was found to criminate either Trivelli or Jacoponi, save in the miserable chamber inhabited by the latter some extracts from the history of Guicciardini, a very specially prohibited author. In the dwellings of some of the other copyists a few more or less compromising writings were found.

For a month Trivelli maintained silence, saying that he knew nothing more than he had already told; but at the end of a month's imprisonment he declared that he had made up his mind to confess everything, and named a variety of persons, Leopoldo Metastasio, the brother of the poet, among others, as the authors of the writings in question. Many of those named were arrested, but it was soon found that they were altogether innocent of the things imputed to them.

Jacoponi gave the examiners less trouble. It was easily proved against him that he had often been in hiding from his creditors; that he had carried off a mattress lent him for charity's sake; that he had been a loose liver; that he had frequently said mass without the *celebret*. Overwhelmed by all this testimony against him, the poor wretch confessed that the "sonnets" were from his pen; that he had written them to escape starvation; and that Trivelli, while engaging him to write them, gave him but a miserable pittance out of the sums he was all the time receiving from the Bargello. The sonnet on the Princess Corsini was his. There are eight of these precious productions among the archives of the trial, full of ribaldry and obscenity, but scarcely sufficiently connected to have any sense in them.

But Trivelli continued firm in his system of denial, and reiterated examinations and interrogations carried the time on to February of the year 1737. In that month the examining judges determined to place suborned witnesses in the cell with Trivelli. Two men, a cobbler and a water-carrier, were placed in the same cell with him, and after a short time swore that he had confessed himself the author of the writings he was suspected to have written, and that he was guilty of a variety of abominations besides. There can be little doubt that the whole of this testimony was absolutely false.

A court of special commissioners was named for the trial, an indication of the importance attributed to the matter by the Government. The trial was conducted with closed doors, in Latin, and entirely by means of written pleadings. The proceedings are full of absurdities. The public prosecutor produced the testimony of the landlady of Trivelli's lodging, who deposed that he was constantly writing at night with his door locked. And this damning evidence is rebutted by his advocate, not by pointing out that the fact that a man is employed in writing hardly proves him to have been engaged in writing treason, but by quoting certain ancient authors who say, "*Mulier dicitur mendax, fallax, dolosa, perjura, mutabilis et varia.*" Ergo the landlady's evidence is worth nothing.

Trivelli continued firm in his absolute denial to the end; but, despite such solemn judicial trifling as the above, and much more of the same sort, his own guilt, and the infamy and falsehood of his denunciations of others, was clear to all men. Of course the issue of the trial was from the beginning of it not doubtful. On February 20, 1737, the sentence was pronounced.

Count Enrico Trivelli, for the composition of malicious and seditious writings, is condemned to be decapitated and to perpetual infamy.

The priest Gian Battista Jacoponi, for the composition of slanderous writings, is condemned to be decapitated, having first been unfrocked and subject to the approval of his Holiness.

All the other prisoners were released, some absolved and the others adjudged to have been sufficiently punished by the imprisonment they had already suffered.

Jacoponi was taken back to his cell, because, before subjecting him to capital punishment by the secular arm, it was necessary that he should undergo the ceremony of degradation from the priesthood, and before this could be proceeded to it was necessary to refer to the Holy Father.

But Trivelli was at once taken to the "conforteria"—literally, comforting place—of the prison, and handed over to the Brethren of San Giovanni Decollato, whose office it was to prepare condemned criminals for execution.

In the meantime all Rome was thronging to see the ceremony of the degradation of a priest. It was appointed to take place in the church of Santa Lucia del Gonfalone. Already at an early hour of February 22 the crowd in the vicinity of the church was such that the circulation was impeded. The carriages of the princes, prelates, and noble ladies who were anxious to enjoy the spectacle, and who had obtained tickets from the Governor of Rome admitting them to the church, could hardly reach the door of it. It became necessary to call out soldiers to keep the mob in order and clear the way. But here a difficulty presented itself. It was known that the soldiers and the *birri* of the police would infallibly fight together if they encountered each other on the same

ground. At last, to avoid this, it was decided that the *birri* should be employed only within the church, while the soldiers should keep order in the street. When all was arranged, however, a message was brought to the Governor from the Secretary of State, the Cardinal Neri Corsini, ordering him to suspend the proceedings, in order to allow time for more mature deliberation on the part of the Holy Father. So the crowd waited in anxious expectation of the spectacle till the evening, when a missive was brought to the Governor announcing that his Holiness had commuted the sentence of death in the case of Gian Battista Jacoponi to imprisonment in the galleys for life. The ceremony of degradation, therefore, was unnecessary.

Great was the disappointment of the rank and fashion of Rome. The ladies, the prelates, and the princes had to console themselves with the reflection that an execution still remained to them. Still the decapitation of a layman was but a small and uninteresting matter in comparison with the degradation and expected execution of a priest.

The chronicler records that the Cardinal Vicar-General Guadagni was the most efficacious suppliant to Clement for the life of the poor priest. The Vicar-General, whose office is that of the real and acting Bishop of the Diocese of Rome, represented to the Holy Father that he was himself the most grossly attacked of all Jacoponi's victims; that it would be a permanent grief to him to have caused the death of any man; and, finally, he is said to have clinched the matter by an argument, which decided the Holy Father to be "merciful," by representing to him that the galleys were worse than a hundred deaths.

And thus the pauper priest Gian Battista Jacoponi vanishes into the darkness, and we hear no more of him.

At ten o'clock on the night of February 22 the Abate Count Enrico Trivelli was sleeping profoundly, when the Governor's officer came to intimate to him his sentence, which, however, he knew already; and the "comforters" of the Brotherhood of San Giovanni Decollato appeared at the officer's heels to perform their office. The unhappy man would none of their comfort. He, however, sent for the chief person of the Brotherhood, and to him declared, signing his formal declaration to that effect, the entire innocence of all the persons he had accused. He then asked for paper and pen and wrote a letter to his mother. But the brothers of the confraternity continued to urge him to turn his thoughts from the life he was about to quit to that he was on the point of entering. But their efforts were in vain. He brusquely told them not to trouble him with the vulgar and threadbare phrases they were accustomed to address to ordinary malefactors; and again demanding pen and ink, he indited a long supplication to the Pope—in verse!

Among the records of the trial and its result the poem composed under such strange circumstances is preserved. It will hardly be imagined that the poor penny-a-liner's verses had under the best circumstances much pretension to poetry; but it is truly extraordinary, and

is a singular instance of the ruling habitude, if not the ruling passion, strong in death, that the miserable man should have been able to compel his mind under such circumstances to versify at all. He writes :—

Oh, gran Padre del Ciel, venero i tuoi
Arcani; e la cagion de miei affanni
Trovo in me stesso, che per altri errori
Chiamai l'inevitabile vendetta.*

The “other errors” to which he alludes were the having killed a lover of his sister, of whose alliance he disapproved, a deed which appears to have been the cause of his flight from Naples and his seeking a refuge at Rome.

The condemned man’s poem terminates thus :—

Deh! con la destra che non mai vi stanca
Di benedir la battezzata gente,
Quel vigore mi reca, il qual mi manca;
E l’ali alla mia anima
Componi, ond’ ella presa a sdegno il suolo
Dispieghi già su per le stelle il volo.†

And still the principal actor in this strange scene of a last night in a condemned cell could not be got to play his part in it according to the prescribed rules.

The picture which the record presents of the scene in the chamber of the “conforteria,” where these things passed, is very singularly characteristic of the time and of the idiosyncrasies of the world which made the time what it was. While the miserable condemned man was persisting in turning a deaf ear to the professional religious comfortings of the brotherhood, and occupying himself with tagging verses, the former amused the intervals in their perfunctory proffers of crucifixes and rosaries, and the other prescribed means for evading the rigour of that judgment which was at the same time represented as infallibly just, by chatting with the guardians and turnkeys and officials, who had looked in to amuse themselves, about the family and progenitors of the prisoner, about a variety of offences attributed by gossip to sundry among these, and by speculative considerations of the probability that such a parentage should lead to the results now before them.

At last the “comforters” of the brotherhood, finding their practised efforts fruitless, decide upon sending for a Jesuit confessor, the Father Santi Canale. This learned divine sets himself at once to the task before him *secundum artem*. But he found his penitent more disposed to argue than to hear. He entered into theological disquisitions with the worthy Jesuit, and made some show of acquaintance with the subject. But the

* “O great Father of Heaven, I venerate thy secrets, and find the cause of my woes in myself, who by other errors have called down on myself inevitable retribution.”

† “Oh! with thy right hand, never weary of blessing the baptized, give me that vigour which fails me, and add wings to my soul, so that, disdaining the earth, she may wing her flight to the stars.”

hours were slipping away, and the good father was in despair. At last he bethought him of inviting his penitent—I had almost said patient—to recite with him the hymn to the Virgin, *Sub tuum presidium*. And lo, a miracle! for such the contemporary chronicler evidently considers it. The recalcitrant sinner's heart is softened. He breaks into a convulsion of tears; he confesses in due form, receives the Sacrament, and listens to the exhortations of the confessor.

Thus passed the night of the 22nd, and it is the dawn of the condemned man's last day.

The Brethren of San Giovanni help him to make his toilet. His black coat with silver buttons, his silk cravat, his three-cornered hat with its band of red and white, have all been confiscated for the expenses of the trial, but he is allowed the use of them for this occasion. He is asked, according to custom, whether he wishes for anything. He replies that he has four favours to ask—that he should be spared the sight of the Bargello, who had betrayed him; that the executioner should not lay hands on him; that he should not be manacled; that he should not be blindfolded. But he is told that these things cannot be granted.

At half-past ten he is brought forth from the prison. The fatal cart is in waiting. Around it and immediately in front of the prison door are the Brethren of San Giovanni Decollato, sinister-looking figures in their linen dresses of black, with black hoods hiding the entire face and figure, with their crucifix-bearer rearing an immense crucifix at the head of the cart. A visible shudder passed over the prisoner at the sight, and he flung himself on his knees at the prison door and prayed. Some steps are placed behind the cart, up which he is assisted. The priest Diodato Barcali, stated to have been "a celebrated comforter," enters the cart with him. The executioner, bearing his tremendous weapon, precedes the cart, together with the terrible-looking crucifix-bearer. The cart is surrounded by jailers, black-hooded brethren, and an outer ring of soldiers. And so the procession moves to the Bridge of St. Angelo, which is the place appointed for the execution.

On the piazza in front of the bridge there stood at that time a small chapel, into which condemned criminals were taken to offer up their last prayers. But short space was allowed for them; and when the luckless Count came forth from the little building he saw close to the door of it the gleam of the new axe, which had been provided in compliance with the rule which forbade the execution of a noble with a weapon which had been stained with plebeian blood. Immediately on coming out from the chapel the victim was seized by the executioner, who removed his coat, threw back his shirt from his neck, blindfolded him, and then guided him to the foot of the steps which led to the raised scaffold.

As he felt the first step with his foot a shudder seized him. He threw himself down on his knees, and sobbing, crying aloud, praying, and uttering broken words of appeal to the crowd, strove to gain yet a few moments of existence. But the executioner, becoming impatient, pushed

him from behind, and the Brethren of St. John on either side almost carried him up the steps. His head was forced down upon the block, and in the next moment all was over.

In truth, the "minister of the law" had reason to feel that there was no time to be lost. Not only was all the rank and fashion of Rome assembled to see the spectacle waiting, but the patient had made so many and such unconscionable delays that it was twelve o'clock before the axe fell and at two o'clock the first masquerade of Carnival was to begin!

By rights the body ought to have been exposed to the public curiosity for twenty-four hours; but on this occasion the time was shortened to one hour, in order that it might be possible to get the scaffold and all its hideous accompaniments out of the way before the laughing, screaming, chattering masks should be running over the piazza.

Such was the end of the poor penny-a-liner.

Large numbers, often continuous files, of the *avvisi* spoken of in the preceding pages are preserved in many of the archives and muniment rooms of Rome. In many cases they have been written by persons of a very different stamp from our poor Abate, and they contain a wonderfully rich mine of illustrations of the old Roman life, which has been as yet hardly at all worked. Perhaps at some future day we may attempt to sink another shaft into the ore.

The Decay of Literature.

A DISTINGUISHED French writer not long ago uttered a lamentation over the decline of criticism. The complaint was supported by specific allegations as to the state of French literature, upon which it might be presumptuous to express a decided opinion. Yet such phenomena do not concern one country alone. Changes in the world of thought are propagated rapidly beyond the centre of origin. The alleged causes of decay are certainly operative in England as well as in France; and if it be true that the French are producing no worthy successors to the critics of the past generation, it is time for us to ask whether we can see reason for more cheerful anticipations in England. The complaint, indeed, sounds at first sight ill-directed. We are often told that this is pre-eminently the age of criticism. It is common to allege a proclivity to criticism as some explanation of other deficiencies. In a critical age the artist is made over-sensitive and forced into morbid self-consciousness by the conditions of the time. When he throws his work into a world peopled by Saturday Reviewers and swarming with contributors to periodicals eager for some new victim, he feels like the prisoner in the September massacres, who gathered strength from despair, shut his eyes, and precipitated himself into the armed sea of murderers in the street. The author may be badly off, but the critics themselves must surely be having a fine time of it. If sport with moderns should ever be slack, they can make studies of the past. They can show at once their penetration and their generous enthusiasm by exalting some genius whom his innocent contemporaries had always taken to be a fool. And then criticism has arrayed itself in some of the dignity of a science. It can discourse of phases of development, of the social organism, of differentiation and evolution, and the spirit of the age as learnedly as "sociology" itself. It ridicules the old-fashioned critic of the Rymer and John Dennis period, who was content to point out that Shakespeare often neglected the unities; and smiles at the judicious Addison who tested *Paradise Lost* by the canons of Aristotle and the ingenious M. Bossu. Modern criticism began by an attack upon the rule of Pope, that wicked and narrow-minded person who wished that all the trees of the forest should be clipped and trimmed to suit the neat little Twickenham garden. But this was in early days, when Coleridge and Wordsworth and Lamb were assailing one tyranny only with the aim of restoring the preceding dynasty. We have now reached a wider and more cosmopolitan point of view. We can be just to Pope as well as to the Elizabethans. We are neither classicists nor romanticists, but magnificent eclectics, who

assign to every man his proper place, and pronounce every literary species to be good in its kind. We survey with scientific impartiality the whole field of human achievement; we ticket our specimens as belonging to the ages of iron or the mediæval period, the Renaissance, the *Aujklarung*, the Revolution, and so forth; and fill our museums with the spoils of all ages. And then, guided by the great comparative method, which has worked such wonders, we see how each development was the natural product of the race in its given environment, exalt ourselves above the petty prejudices of any particular place or time, and, ceasing to condemn or absolve in obedience to the temporary dogmatism of passing prejudices, we simply explain. Each great writer takes his proper place as one special avatar of the world-spirit; and we lay down theories firm and irrevocable as those of the physical sciences, and yet leaving full play for intelligent enthusiasm.

Indeed, in all seriousness, we may admit that criticism has of late raised its aims and improved its methods. We cannot read any modern criticism without perceiving that it rests upon investigation incomparably more minute and careful than formerly was thought necessary. If no modern writer can surpass Johnson's vigorous common sense, there is certainly no modern writer with any regard for his reputation who would dare to publish the hasty opinions and slovenly statements of fact which disfigure the *Lives of the Poets*. Nor would any modern so implicitly adopt the canons of any one school and condemn every other form of art so unhesitatingly, as though indifference to its conventions was necessarily an offence against the eternal and infallible code. Our judgments are more catholic—more scientific, if you please—and rest upon a much wider induction and more minute examination of the facts. And yet do we not miss something? If we are less narrow in our principles, are we not blunter in our perceptions? Have we not lost something of the fineness of tact which belonged to men trained in a fixed tradition?

Criticism has become more scientific, but less delicate and less really sympathetic. Read, for example, M. Taine's brilliant account of English literature. It is forcible and comprehensive. It lays down broad and sound principles, and shows us the special case in its larger relations. But when we come to details we are often edified. His criticism of every particular Englishman is but a repetition of the general rule that every Englishman is a broad, beef-eating, coarse, vigorous John Bull, who lives in a fog, and cuts his throat when he has the spleen. We see the type, but not the individual. Charles Lamb can tell us nothing about the organism and the environment, or the influence of climate upon national character. But when he speaks within his own sphere he speaks as an expert, because he speaks as a lover. He is blind, it may be, to all kinds of excellence but one. Yet, when dealing with the objects of his real sympathy, he can in a few words give us more of the true secret than is contained in volumes of ponderous German philosophy or brilliant French science. His mind is so imbued and penetrated with

a certain tradition that he can interpret every inflexion of the voice, catch the half-revealed touches of indirect allusion, relish the most delicate and evanescent flavour, humorous or sentimental, and, in short, respond to his author like a highly-strung instrument. The difference is as the difference between a foreigner who comes to a country village and describes the squire or parson as types of the aristocratic and ecclesiastical developments, and the native who, having never been beyond his horizon, cannot even conceive of a society without a squire and parson, but has yet penetrated the very essence of their character, and can make a shrewd guess at the text of the parson's sermon from the way in which he has tied his bands. The decay of criticism of which our French contemporary complains is due in part to this change. We have become so philosophical and so fond of wide generalisations that we have partly lost our instinct and are incapable of perceiving the individual. The criticism to which he looks back was the criticism of men who did not bother themselves about science, and did not aim at being cosmopolitan, but who, having been brought up in certain traditions—traditions which on the whole, too, represented a vast amount of clear good sense—had still spontaneous instinct enough to judge dogmatically, quickly, and with real perception of the qualities concerned.

This, I say, may be a part of the explanation, and it may go further than appears at first sight. For to say that this is the age of criticism means that it is the age of science. And it would be easy enough to take up an old text and show in how many respects the scientific is opposed to the literary impulse; how caution and circumspection take the place of unhesitating conviction; how science fosters a provisional scepticism, an examination of all supposed first principles, which is fatal to the vivid utterance of any conviction; how it applies a chilling "if" to all the imagery in which some conditional belief is necessary even for the artist who takes it to symbolise his creations; how a period in which we are prying into the roots of all traditional creeds is not a period in which they will bear the blossom of poetical embodiment. Yet all this is a generality rather too wide for our purpose, and like other generalities requiring much qualification. Science has flourished alongside of art in the great periods, and to say that the two cannot again flourish together is to show a want of faith in the essential unity of all intellectual development. The phenomenon which we are considering requires some more specific explanation. We may doubt, in fact, if we look a little further, that other causes would have to be assigned.

How does the change in criticism manifest itself in other departments of literature? Can we speak of a decay of criticism without reflecting that there is a much wider decay—a decay of literature itself? It is a delicate matter to handle; for we would not shock living sensibilities by quoting them as examples of obvious degeneracy. There is no want of men of talent, though there may be a dearth of genius, and it would be ungrateful to reproach a genuine poet because he is not one of the great lights

of all time. Half the argument must therefore be left to be filled up by readers. Yet it would be affectation to doubt of certain general results. Would any one maintain, for example, that we are in a great poetical epoch—an epoch such as that of the early years of this or the seventeenth or perhaps even the eighteenth century; that any one will care a century hence to study our poets, as we study Shakespeare, and Spenser, and Milton, and Byron, and Shelley, and Wordsworth, and Keats, and Scott? We have, of course, two great poets still amongst us, and still writing; but, alas! we cannot mention the names of Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning without remembering that they belong more to the outgoing than to the existing generation. There are certainly two or three other younger poets whose genius is equally beyond dispute to men of taste; yet it is some time since even the youngest revealed his powers to the world; and he would be a bold man who would say that he could see elsewhere indications of a ripening intellectual harvest likely to be as rich as the old. Again, let those of us who are old enough go back some thirty years in imagination and compare the prophets of that day with the prophets of this. Let them try to make all possible allowance for the natural illusion which casts a halo round the teachers of our youth. Can they, after making the comparison, say fairly that we could match man for man? In the first period most young men of any intellectual activity followed one of these remarkable teachers. Cardinal Newman is still with us, but has already become classical. Is there any modern theologian who, regarded merely from the literary point of view, is master of so admirable a style, who can display such admirable dialectical skill, such subtlety of thought, such delicacy of sentiment, such a blending of strength with grace, as used to charm the enthusiasts of the movement in which he was the chief leader? Another set of zealots followed the teaching of Carlyle. Carlyle's style will, of course, be condemned by literary purists; and those who object to a free use of the grotesque or the overstrained may show abundant reasons for not accepting him as a model. But it is not from that point of view that he can be adequately judged. And one may safely say that there is no living writer whose influence over congenial minds is comparable to Carlyle's as an intellectual stimulus. You might return from the strange glooms and splendours of the *French Revolution* or *Sartor Resartus* revolted or fascinated; but to read them with appreciation was to go through an intellectual crisis, and to enter into their spirit was to experience something like a religious conversion. You were not the same man afterwards. No one ever exercised a more potent sway over the inmost being of his disciple. The many whose temperament put them outside the charmed circles of Newman and Carlyle found a more temperate and prosaic leader in J. S. Mill. Even the disciples of Mill's school have shown a tendency of late to modify, if not radically to alter, the old tradition. Yet no one has arisen amongst them who can be compared in a literary sense with Mill. There may be more accurate, minute, and

comprehensive thinkers of his school. They have produced no books at all comparable in point of style, or as models of literary composition, with those in which Mill showed his masculine vigour as a thinker, his extraordinary fulness of mind, and his fascinating power of importing at least apparent lucidity into the darkest and most perplexed subjects. That thought has advanced in all the directions indicated by these names may be fully admitted ; we can in a sense judge them from a superior standpoint and mark their limitations. But have we—the products of the later generation—produced any leaders so capable of erecting permanent literary landmarks ?

Make a sharp transition. In those days, about thirty years ago, there were novelists of the first rank ; writers such that the announcement of a new publication by them sent a thrill through every corner not inaccessible to circulating libraries. In the period from twenty to forty years removed from us, we had been startled by the new power revealed, though not for the first time, in *Vanity Fair* ; and had eagerly accepted *Pendennis* and the *Newcomes* and *Esmond*. A foolish controversy, still sometimes continued, was raging as to the rival merits of their author and the contemporary author of *Pickwick* and *David Copperfield*. Wiser persons enjoyed both, and there were few months in which one did not greet with delight the appearance of a number of one serial in the familiar yellow, and another in the equally familiar green. Then the whole literary world had just been thrown into an excitement, never since paralleled, by the sudden apparition of *Jane Eyre*. A greater writer was making a more gradual approach to fame by the publication of the *Scenes of Clerical Life*. And besides Thackeray, Dickens, Miss Brontë, and George Eliot, a number of writers, some happily still living, provided agreeable entertainment in the intervals, and might be regarded as at least worthy subordinates. Lord Lytton—to mention only the dead—was publishing *My Novel* and *The Caxtons*, which are at least excellent specimens of good literary craftsmanship ; Mrs. Gaskell produced *Ruth* and *Mary Barton* ; and Kingsley wrote *Alton Locke* and *Hypatia* and *Westward Ho!* books which, if they will not bear the closest inspection in all respects, show at least a vigour and originality for which it would be hard to produce a later parallel. It is rather dangerous, perhaps, to ask whether we have such novelists now. But, allowing every reader to select his favourite or pair of favourites to be worthy champions of the moderns, he will find it hard to fill up a list capable of doing battle against their predecessors. Have we any counterbalancing considerations to suggest ? Is there any department of literature in which we can claim a preponderance as distinct as our predecessors in this direction ? In poetry, philosophy, fiction, we seem to have the worst of it. There is yet one direction in which we might make a stand. History should be a strong point, for in history we are approaching the scientific field ; and in history nobody can doubt that we have made in some respects enormous advances. The Anglo-Saxon and Charlemagne

have been nearly abolished ; and that is understood to mean that we have made a great advance in accuracy of research. But, from the literary point of view, it may be doubted whether we could meet without misgiving such a champion as Macaulay. The difference is significant. It is easy to point out Macaulay's glaring defects ; the limitation of his political views ; the offensive glitter of his style ; and, in that respect, at least one living historian seems to be justly his superior. Yet when we read the *Essays* and the first part of the *History* we are less confident. The extraordinary fulness of knowledge, the command of materials, the power of grouping events and forming them into a clear and flowing narrative, are so undeniable that we are inclined to admit, in spite of all his faults, that he is unapproached by his successors in the power which goes to a monumental work. Modern writers seem to be sometimes the victims of an indigestion caught at the State Paper Office ; sometimes they are tempted to tack together a series of brilliant pamphlets, and trust to fortune to make it a history. At present they seem scarcely capable of turning out work so massive, so finely executed, and marked by such unity of design as their forefathers. And yet we may admit that, in history at least, we have the advantage of a serious and energetic body of students really achieving good work, and at least accumulating the material of literary triumphs. Casting a rapid glance over these facts, the conclusion seems to be inevitable. The literary, like the natural, harvest has been of late blighted and scanty. We have passed from a land flowing with milk and honey into a comparative desert. As Johnson said when he went from England to Scotland, we see the flower dying away to the stalk. In a utilitarian and scientific sense we may be making progress ; in the regions of imagination and artistic achievement—so far at least as literature is concerned—we have been progressing backwards. Great names are scarce ; there is hardly a leader left who can stir the enthusiasm of the young and make us feel that the torch of intellectual light is being delivered into worthy hands. If we would not flatter the time, must we not confess that we are at least crossing a barren zone ; and at present without any distinct glimpse of a fertile region beyond ?

Admitting the fact, we can of course be in no want of explanations. Any popular preacher—in or out of the pulpit—will supply us with as many as we please. It is all the fault of democracy, says one self-appointed prophet. How should culture, refinement, polish, be appreciated in art when they fail to govern society ? They are the fruits of a settled order, of a select circle trained in accepted traditions of refinement, able to perceive and appreciate delicate shades of manner and meaning, and revolted instinctively by the coarse and glaring. How can such plants thrive in the social hubbub and anarchy of to-day ? As well expect the candidate in a popular constituency to attract voters by the graces of a courtier under the old *régime* as expect a modern writer to emulate the polish of his forefathers. The loud-voiced noisy sputter,

the man who does not stick at trifles or bother himself about logical consistency, who can give his hearers good potent stimulants instead of delicate flavours, is the man for a mob; and he will hustle the more thin-skinned orator, with his fine perceptions and wire-drawn scruples, out of the arena. What encouragement is there for doing delicate work when you work for the million who prefer noise to harmony, and cannot be bothered to draw distinctions between a Tennyson and a Tupper? Why put the labour of years on producing that exquisite polish which makes all the difference between the finest and the coarsest work, but which is utterly overlooked by the vulgar? The finest work, like the coarsest, will at best gain five minutes' attention between the leading article and the sensation novel. What chance that it will be appreciated? You have to learn before all things the art of advertising; for you are one of a mob of writers all struggling for attention, and to advertise is essentially to attract buyers of your goods by inducements independent of their intrinsic merits. And if your aspirations are of the highest, how are you to maintain the necessary quietness of soul in the bustle and confusion of modern life? Make the least error, and the whole band of admirers and puffers and genial critics makes a dead set at you, crying out "More of that!" and inciting you to be faithless to yourself, and stimulate your little vein of spontaneous originality into feverish and morbid activity.

Such declamation may be continued indefinitely. When we ask calmly what it means, we may see reasons for doubt. Let us "clear our minds of cant," and above all of the cant of the pessimists. Is it not the plain truth that every social order has its characteristic dangers? The danger in ages of calm and refinement is the danger of sterility. The artist becomes finicking and over-critical. He is such a delicate plant that he ceases to bear fruit. He becomes, like Gray, so sensitive that it takes him two years to write a score of delicate stanzas. For the true critic we have the exquisite connoisseur, who cannot bear the crumpled rose-leaf, and values mere technical quality at the expense of power and abundance. If we are in a period when the opposite faults are more common, we must not overlook our advantages. The greatest writers, said Scott somewhere—and he had no doubt personal reasons for the remark—have been the most voluminous. They have, in other words, been men so full of superabundant energy that they dashed out their work at white-heat, now making a blunder and now achieving a masterpiece. Not only Scott himself, but Shakespeare, may be quoted in illustration. Such men and many others wrote impetuously, and the best of them wrote at periods when the world was throbbing with passionate excitement, and the old school of refined critics was for the time being thrust to the wall. Revolutions in the world of thought, as in the political world, bring great men to the front by sheer force of contagious enthusiasm. Now is it true that we may regret the lines which Shakespeare neglected to blot, and the slovenly style of too many of Scott's

productions? Perhaps, if you are a delicate connoisseur, you would rather be a Landor than a Scott, and dine with a select party a century after you are dead instead of feasting in a crowded hall of the living. We need not dispute the point; though probably the ultimate judgment of the world will be that the men who thrilled and moved their contemporaries should really have the preference to the manufacturers of exquisite jewellery for the select few. But, in any case, the difficulty for our present purpose remains. We are as wanting in Scotts and Byrons at least as much as in Landors or Keatses. Indeed, it might be plausibly maintained that we are more wanting. Mr. Tennyson, whatever else he may be, is amongst the most exquisite artists who ever wrote in English; and it would be easy to quote other instances. Indeed, the prevailing fault of our most popular school at the moment is the tendency to an excessive appreciation of the more delicate and effeminate forms of art. Why have we not a Scott pouring forth three Waverley novels in a year, or a Byron writing *Giaours* and *Childe Harolds* and *Don Juans* at the full speed of his pen? The adulation which surrounds a popular author to-day is scarcely more exciting or unsettling than that which led Scott and Byron to over-hasty production. If the excitements of the present time, the vast changes of thought and society, which in the dawn of the revolutionary movement brought out such a host of vigorous writers, do not produce the same effect, it is certainly not because the questions at issue are less momentous, or men less profoundly interested. Nor, again, can it be that the intellect of to-day has become frivolous and superficial. Whatever our dearth of great names, there was never a time in which more severe and strenuous intellectual labour was bestowed upon extending and modifying our thoughts upon all topics in which thought can be exercised. Never were there more competent and thoroughgoing students of philosophy and history and science. Where there was one serious labourer in any such field half a century ago, there are now twenty. Many of them at least have withstood the temptation to be superficial and merely popular. Why do they produce no such leaders as of old?

An answer is often given by saying that the social is but the counterpart of a spiritual class; that men's minds are unsettled upon all topics; that every opinion is disputed and discussed; and that even men of settled convictions are chilled and paralysed by the absence of general sympathy. The text upon which Carlyle and Mr. Ruskin have preached so eloquently and forcibly might of course be expanded indefinitely. We might add in particular that it is as applicable to artistic as to philosophical movements. The queer phenomenon called aestheticism is an indication of its importance. Your true æsthetic is a cultivated person who has reached a kind of artistic indifferentism. He has learnt to sympathise with so many forms of art that he really sympathises with none. As knowledge has extended, we have become familiar with all forms of the beautiful; we have played like children with

"revivals" of all kinds ; we have been by turns classical and romantic ; we have aped the mediæval and the renaissance, and even the "Queen Anne" period, with earnestness enough for masqueraders ; and the asthete, bewildered and jaded, has come to the conclusion that, on the whole, there is no principle at all ; that every artistic creed has pleased in its turn ; that none can be said to be right or wrong ; that whatever pleases is therefore right ; and consequently that the only principle is to have as many and as keen tastes as possible. The misfortune is that in this hopeless chaos of tastes and fashions we lose sight of the one important thing, ourselves ; that all our tastes have become affectations, and that we have lost precisely that spontaneity which is the universal condition of excellence in any form of art whatever. We change restlessly and hopelessly ; we have a taste for everything and a genuine enthusiasm for nothing ; all our work is more or less of a sham ; and our poets, who can turn out a very pretty ballad or mediæval romance, or Elizabethan drama or classical idyl, somehow find one thing impossible—namely, to give full utterance to the hopes and fears and aspirations of living men.

Granting all that may be said upon this score, there yet remains a difficulty. Why should this be so ? Why, if the old ideals have become hollow and we have not framed ideals of our own, should we not take refuge in a downright realism ? Life, surely, is as interesting as ever ; the impulses which move men's hearts and convulse the whole social order manifest themselves at least as clearly to every reflective mind. If we cannot take much interest in classical mythology, and the old gods and goddesses appear to us as bloodless phantoms, surely a downright portraiture of the men and women of to-day, of the joys and sorrows felt by the millions of our struggling cities, should excite more interest than ever in the thoughtful, who are daily forced to consider the practical problems involved. If we are tired of knights in buff jerkins, we have by no means heard the last of *Alton Locke*, and the yeast of which Kingsley spoke is working and fermenting with unprecedented vehemence. Some writers seem to accept this principle ; though unluckily, in certain of its manifestations, realism and naturalism seem to mean a steady contemplation of the nasty. But in England at least realism does not appear to thrive. If poetry shrinks from such work, it should surely be suitable to novelists. Thackeray painted the upper classes of his day, and Dickens caricatured their inferiors, and each, after his kind, showed astonishing penetration. But they seem to have left no successors. We have some most graceful and delicate portrait-painters, and many who can give us pleasant domestic interiors, and others who can interest grown-up children with extravagant "sensation" stories. What we do not see is the power possessed, for example, by Fielding in an eminent degree, of laying bare the real working forces of society, and making us know better the actual men and women of our own day. We do not want tracts or blue-books in the shape of fiction ; but we do want to get a downright masculine insight into living realities, and it

can hardly be said that we are often so lucky as to get it. Carlyle accused Scott of writing merely for the purpose of "harmlessly amusing indolent, languid men." It was the kind of judgment which your true Puritan forms upon all forms of story-telling; and it is far from being just to Scott's noblest work. But in our own day it would seem that not only is any high aim become inconceivable, but that there is an express aversion to anything which implies thought in the writer and requires it from the reader. Novelists who make any demands upon our attention must generally be content to go unread.

If, then, we might argue from the absence of great names, of reputations due to lofty purpose and strenuous endeavour, we might come to the conclusion that frivolity and littleness is the mark of our time. Some people accept that conclusion, as, indeed, there never was an age which was not pronounced by contemporary moralists to be unprecedentedly deficient in virtue and high purpose. To ask whether such a melancholy conclusion would be justifiable just now upon other grounds would be to affect an impossible omniscience. To draw such an inference, however, from the grounds here considered would be rash, or rather plainly erroneous. It is so far from being true that the absence of great elevations implies a decline of the general standard that the reverse is in many cases demonstrable. If we have not great teachers, it is not because inquiry is less eagerly pushed, whatever else may be the cause. It is just the coincidence between the marked increase of intellectual activity and appreciation of beauty in some directions, and the absence of great artists and great leaders of thought, which makes the problem really curious and interesting. But if it be asked, what then is the explanation? there are only two answers to be suggested—namely, that we do not know, and that it does not greatly matter. We do not know, probably we shall never know, what are the causes and the indications of the great intellectual harvests. Who can tell why at one moment there arises a group of eminent men, producing masterpieces for all future times, and why the group dies out and leaves no successors? Who can say why Shakespeare flourished in one generation, and no Englishmen have ever since been able to write more than second-rate dramas? Why the last half of the eighteenth century was barren even in the kind of poetry in which its early years were so prolific? Why, again, the group of great writers in the first years of this century have left so few worthy successors? After the event we can of course suggest some kind of explanation, especially that kind of explanation which consists in stating the facts over again in different language. We can point to some crisis in thought or in social development which must have stimulated men's minds to unusual activity, inasmuch as we know that, as a matter of fact, it did so. But those who have read philosophical speculations upon such topics most attentively will be the first to admit how unsatisfactory and superficial are the explanations which they offer. We can only say in the vaguest way that in the mental as in the physical world there are

periods of sudden blossoming, when the vital forces of nature are manifested in the production of exquisite flowers, and after which it again passes into a latent stage. But so long as there is no reason to assume any diminution of vitality, there is no reason for inferring that a temporary obscurity will not be followed by new flashes of light. Perhaps the Shakespeare of the twentieth century is already learning the rudiments of infantile speech, and some of us may live to greet his appearance, and probably—for we shall then be twenty years older—to lament the inferiority of the generation which accepts him. Who, again, can tell? And what, let us add, does it matter? Can we not rub along pretty well without contemporaries of the highest excellence? Thought is moving somehow, and mankind is trying to assimilate the new ideas which have been slowly drilled into its thick heads. And what is the real value to mankind of even the highest literary excellence? Is it not after all a luxury—an amusement—a feather in the cap of a nation, but something which has but a very small relation to its true interests? How far does its influence penetrate below that cultivated stratum which naturally takes itself to be the one stratum worth considering, but is, in reality, no such matter? How many people were there even during the period of the greatest men who really studied or in the least degree understood their works, or even knew of their existence? When we say that a great man influences thought, is it not much nearer the truth to say that he expresses rather more exquisitely conclusions which would have been rendered in a more clumsy fashion without him? Is he not rather an effect than a cause, and an effect of no very great importance to the bulk of mankind? Walk through the streets of London for a day and ask how many men you meet who have really the slightest appreciation of, say, Mr. Darwin, or anything more than a vague impression that he somehow considered men to be a kind of monkey? And, whatever the importance of his theories, is it not notorious, and, indeed, the very secret of their importance, that he was but just ahead of numerous competitors aiming at the same goal? What can be said of mere literary reputations: of your Shakespeares and Dantes and Homers? Putting aside the great mass to whom they are mere names, or at the most represent a kind of superstitious tradition, what are they even to the few who study them? Analyse the life of your aesthetic critic who lavishes his adulation upon their shrines, and find out, if you can, how much of his real life, of the interests which occupy his mind and determine his conduct, are really due to the poems which he professes to idolise. Have their writings been polestars or mere playthings to amuse leisure hours in the interval of more serious interests? We can do very well, for a time, without new stars of the first magnitude, and content ourselves with those of past ages, believing contentedly, if we please, that so long as the energy of the race continues unabated, it will from time to time, though at what time we cannot say, throw out again, as of old, a group of dazzling luminaries.

Back from the Road.

It is only just back from the road, that, ankle-deep in mud in winter and in dust in summer, creeps down a hill away to a little town, crowned by an old, old church, and washed by the broad blue sea. But it might be miles from anywhere, so dense is the gloom, so great is the quiet that surrounds the place, and appears like an intangible wall keeping off evil intruders. Another wall exists, crowned in summer by many-coloured snapdragons, that grow all along the top, and with every niche full of moss, and here and there a hart's-tongue fern or the tiny spleen-wort, and when we push open the faded green door, and come out into the square before the house, we are insensibly reminded of sixty years ago, and tread softly lest we should arouse sleepers, and awake them rudely to the fact that time has gone on, although they have remained stationary. The place is beautifully kept : there is not a weed on the gravel-path or in the flower-beds, quaintly bordered as they are by a notched bone edging, made from the bones of cow's ankle-joints in a way that is never seen now, and where columbines and Canterbury bells are nodding to each other in the soft wind : while beyond the deep green lawn a tiny fountain rises and falls monotonously and musically under the shadow of a dark broad-branched cypress, that is as the very embodiment of resignation and prayer, and seems the guardian spirit of the place. The lawn slopes quite down to the river, that appears to run slower here, before dashing over the weir away out to the sea, beyond the sand-banks that glitter and gleam like silver in the bright sunshine ; and on one side of the lawn is a paddock separated from the garden by a wire-fence, on which an old pony rests his head and watches us, sure that we shall remember him and rub his ears in the way he particularly affects, and that reminds him of early days and the dear young master he loved ; but he too has learned to wait, and only turns his eyes as we walk up and down, and evinces no impatience, sure that what to-day lacks will be supplied by to-morrow, and if not then, at latest the day after. Indeed, the whole place suggests waiting, as if life existent here, in bee, or bird, or flower, paused for a while, expectant that, some day or other, ripple of laughter or chime of voices would ring out, and fill the silence with human life again. There is no hint or touch of death : even in autumn, when the road outside is strewn with dead leaves and twigs and beech-mast, inside the wall are no signs of coming winter, for the shrubs are evergreen, and the cypress and ilexes change their raiment unnoticed, save by the gardener, who might be a brownie, so unperceived is he, and so fond of working at early

dawn, when the windows of the house have their blinds drawn, and no one can look at him as he sweeps, and weeds, and brushes. The house itself is square and commonplace, with thin white pillars supporting a somewhat crooked porch, at which you, perchance, might even smile; but to us who know all the secrets it represents the united efforts of the young pair who designed it, and saw it carried out proudly beneath their own eyes, as a shelter below which they could sit hand in hand, and watch the baby-boy play and laugh on the lawn, underneath their seat, secure that in so watching him he would not stray down to the river, or wander away to stroke his pony in the paddock: outside the porch is a silent, wide, dark hall, cool in summer, by reason of its marble pavement and shaded, open windows, and hung on each side with soft-toned copies of well-known Italian pictures, done years ago by the bride and bridegroom on their lengthened honeymoon, and brought home with infinite peril—so she says, smiling, even now—across land and sea, to deck their home, now building for them in this quiet, beautiful corner of England. It is curious to note how insensibly, but surely, houses become exactly like their owners: naturally the mere furnishing of them gives them a stamp of individuality, but time does more than this; for as months and years go by, the walls seem to inhale some of the vitality of their inhabitants, and become warmed and almost living as the same people year after year pass their days and nights between them. Or else, how account for the blank expressionless look of an ordinary hotel, passed through by different folks, not dwelt in, or cared for, but simply used as a shelter? or for the warm, crowsy, genial face of another one, lived in by generations of the same family, and each corner of which has its own story and its own associations? or yet, again, for the aspect of this same house, should it change hands—ay, even keeping the same furniture? for then does it not seem cold and resentful, as it puts on a very different aspect to greet those to whom 'tis only a house, and not, as it was erstwhile, a store-place of memories, nay, even a temple sacred to the holiest of holies—a happy, honoured home? Dreaming here on the threshold of the one place we would bring before you, there is no limit to this fancy; for the house, built as it was in love and smiles, and consecrated by loss and sorrow in the lapse of years, bears out entirely our theory: not even the veriest iconoclast of these days of ours could help realising it, and pausing, bare-headed, on the doorstep, ere rushing in to see if he could secure something high-art or Queen Anne with which to mock at—though he knows it not—his own well-loved shams and Tottenham Court imitations, that yet lead his soul from entire revelment in crude blues and reds, to better, because quieter, things. For not even he could help feeling the repose and resignation that could ever be found here, and although he may turn away disgusted when he sees the faded, gaudy Brussels carpets of sixty years ago, and feel conscious that there is nothing here that will harmonise with his surroundings, he will allow

there is something felt, but not expressible, that causes him not to sneer at the poor ugly old things, and that somewhat curiously makes him think of his mother, and the days when money did not represent the be-all and end-all of life, and when hurry, that kill-joy of the present, was not for him, and he had leisure to enjoy the sense of life, and the thousand sounds and scents that make up one's very early recollections. But although we may enter the house, and reverently commune with the past among its shadows, he cannot come in yet, for only yesterday did the mistress leave her quiet, well-loved home for a quieter and better-affectioned one in the beautiful little churchyard, where the snowdrops grow wild all spring, and make it look as if angel's wings enfolded it, and so her presence still seems to linger here; yet when to-morrow comes all the world will rush, nor realise that the auctioneer's Lot I. and Lot II., that means to them but a sordid bargain, represent the different notes in her song of life, as surely as the dots and lines of a sheet of music paper can mean an epithalamium, or a funeral march, or even a march to victory. For she was fifteen years old when the battle of Waterloo was fought, and remembered hearing the news the very day she began a wondrous work of art, that is now framed and hanging over the bookshelves in the drawing-room, as an evidence of what she did before she took to painting in the delicate subdued style that characterised her later days. It is indeed a curious device, and on a black cloth ground represents a cornucopia full of flowers manufactured from small atoms and in successive layers or petals of cloth—in some cases true to nature, while in others truth is sacrificed to sentiment, for a blue passion-flower is made from tiny morsels of a fine pale material of which the gown was composed which she wore the first time she met her future husband, and the white silk honeysuckle, perfect in form if not in hue, is made from the soft shawl that enfolded her one baby the day he opened his eyes on this calm corner of a noisy world. It took her years to complete, for many events passed by, and she forgot from time to time her handiwork; but as life gradually schooled the somewhat impulsive maiden, forming her into the calm matron, well-balanced in mind and manner, she deemed it wrong to have aught incomplete that she had once commenced, and so finished it, and hung it up above the bookcase, proud, though she confessed it not, that she, who was thought unfeminine, because she could do most things best, as companion to the man she loved, had thus vindicated her character, and had given proof that she could do frivolous and womanly sewing should it be necessary for her so to do, as well as, if not better than, the most blushing, retiring wife or maiden in her neighbourhood.

The screen in front of the just extinguished fire has no such happy memories as these, for it was begun and ended in feverish anxiety to find, in constant employment that had no dual associations about it, some other object for contemplation than the dead faces of the husband and child, who perished together in the river below the garden, and who

were brought home and laid in the chamber above this one just five-and-fifty long weary years ago; for how could she paint, when beside her easel stood his; or ride, when his horse was neighing impatiently for him in the stable; or think of reading the book when his paper-knife was still where he had put it, and from whence it was never removed for many years, and then only by accident, of which she seemed to take no notice, though we who loved her, knew well what the heedless action of a young child had done? Nay, rather, she seemed to take to the child; and after time went by, and she had been thirty years a widow, he used to be here always as a grown man of five-and-thirty, and his boy rode the old pony who to-morrow will be shot kindly, for there is none to love or tend him, now his friends are dead. But the screen represented to her a passage from passionate despair to calm hope and prayerful waiting, and to her every stitch represented its own place in the progress—here false stitches displayed backsliding, and there a well-formed, fully-shaded rosebud spoke hopefully of religion conquering natural agony, and hope shining where human eyes saw nothing save blackness and despair. To-morrow the screen will doubtless be sold as rubbish, and may be bought for the glass and frame, and hold some crewel-work of to-day, wrought by machinery, or in hurried single-stitch, without scarce a thought to last a little time; and the work she did may be burned as useless, and we wonder if, when we despise old handiworks and do away with them, we unwittingly pain some tender Shade, who may yet linger awhile or at times amongst us, and almost believe that we do, so tender do we feel towards all the things she made. We feel a pang while we gaze around us, and know that soon all will be dismantled and despised; for none is old enough to be in the fashion, while all is too old to be so useful that it must be kept. In the folds of the long chintz curtains in the drawing-room her child may have played hide-and-seek; his little face, that, painted by Leslie, hangs over his mother's chair, and that can never cease to be the face of a child, may have peeped out roguishly from the faded lilies of the valley among their pale green leaves, and smiled to him even while she chid him laughing; for she must have cared for them, for she always placed the folds herself and saw that they were carefully sent to be "calendered" every successive spring. The lilies are repeated on the carpet, with the addition of scarlet and blue and yellow roses; but all their hues are toned with time, and the sixty years have done nought to it save what is kindly, and, while unmarring the texture, have only softened down its asperities in a way that time alone has, and that he often employs beneficially to us, too impatient, too irritable mortals. The furniture is solid and heavy, from the great sideboard with the cellar beneath—so like a tomb that we distinctly remember feeling ourselves impelled irresistibly to bury our dolls therein—to the great four-post mahogany bedstead in which she slept night after night, all her long quiet lifetime; and we cannot bear to think of the lodging-house parlours and chambers in which it must

and its days. But although we cannot save it all, some one, we know, will buy the contents of that little inner room, that seems the heart of the house, broken, maybe, but still beating where she always said her many prayers, and where her son slept and played those five short years of his life. Here is his rosewood crib, with fluted pillars, loose in places, and easily turned in their sockets, that speak of his restless little fingers, with one side that lets down with a sound that had its own meaning to her ears, and that, caused once by a new housemaid, who knew no traditions, brought to her eyes torrents of tears, though forty years had gone by since the child died ; and here, in a shelf over the fireplace, is a row of small worn books that, bought for him, have been read by all the child-visitors she so dearly loved, and that represented to her her own boy. Any child now happy in the thousand and one lovely and artistic picture-books that crowd our nurseries, would disdainfully turn away from these poor, faded little volumes : their Beauty and the Beast has pages a foot wide, and designs that we long to see reproduced in our dress and houses, while this one has thin brown paper, and rough woodcuts representing Beauty in the dress of the Empire, with a long scarf round her shoulders, and gloves ample in length for a modern beauty's requirements ; while the Beast is like nothing so much as a great Newfoundland dog. This stands by the little collection of anecdotes of Miss Lydia Lively, which is published in 1802 by Darton, Harvey and Darton, and bears on its pages evidences of profound study, inasmuch as little pencil x x 's show exactly how much of these anecdotal pages constituted a lesson ; and bleared round patches on the thin paper disclose further that the readings were not always without tears ; while rhymes for the nursery, an epitome of Scripture history, the Stranger's Offering, and the Parents and Teachers' Catechism, of dates ranging from 1802 to about 1810, tell that they belonged to her own childhood ; and so keep distinct memories from the universal Primer, and original poems, the date of which is 1826. Another little book, bound in rough red binding, with a wavy line across it, has lost its title-page, but is inscribed in her tremulous, fine Italian hand, "The Child's Book," and contains poems and pictures of the simplest and crudest, if the most moral designs. We may save the contents of this little room from the auctioneer's hammer possibly, but as we look round we wonder if, when we are gone too, and our belongings in their turn are scattered, there will be any of the aroma of the past left among them. This whole place appears to us full of the most delicate fragrance, full of hope or love, or pain or fear ; and is like some rare perfume enclosed safely in a crystal flask, that must be shattered to-morrow when the world comes in to buy and sell. We may catch a few drops as the bottle breaks, but it cannot last ; once it is dispelled, all must vanish like a dream, or like the life that was lived in all its various phases within these walls. And so from this we come to wonder why we should ever be vexed, or worn, or suffer, when 'tis all for such a little space ; and when life has to be let

to run its course, however much we try to stem the stream, and call out against the inevitable. The river runs, and best are those who go on their way with it quietly—not rushing, neither expecting too much, and rather resting, like a caged bird does, once the first vain struggles are over, quiet, yet watchful for escape, which oft comes not until death opens our prison door. Thinking like this, we cannot envy the dwellers in great cities, who may not stay awhile without seeming to throw out of gear all that complex machinery they call society; even while we regret more sadly than ever all we shall lose when we can no longer find a resting-place, back from the road.

J. E. PANTON.

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"ROTEN, LOOK AT ME!—LISTEN!"

No New Thing.

CHAPTER XVI. MATERNAL INFLUENCE.



HEN Mr. Brune escaped from the presence of the justly incensed Mrs. Winnington, he shaped his course for home without further delay. Under the circumstances, he no longer cared to search the house for his son, being in some fear of drifting into an embarrassing situation, and thinking, too, that it would be best to let the young fellow choose his own time for making any revelations that might have to be made.

He had not, however, proceeded very far on his way through the gathering gloom when he was arrested by a shrill whistle; imme-

diately after which some one crossed the adjacent meadow at a slinging trot, and, taking the hedgerow in his stride, landed neatly in the muddy lane.

"Oh, there you are!" said Mr. Brune. "They told me you were up at the house, but I couldn't find you anywhere about."

"I saw you starting; so I thought I might as well catch you up," answered Walter, passing his arm through his father's; and so they walked on for a couple of hundred yards or so in silence.

"I say—" began Walter at length.

"Well; what do you say?"

Facility of expression had never been among Walter's gifts. He thought for a little longer, and then made a fresh start with—

"I—er—I've got a sort of a secret to tell you."

"Ah!" remarked Mr. Brune, "you may well say a sort of a secret. A secret, I take it, is a matter known, at the most, to two persons; when a third is let in, it becomes, as you say, a sort of a secret; but

when an interested party happens to have overheard the whole business from beginning to end, it is no longer any sort of a secret at all."

"Eh?"

"You need not give yourself the agony of searching for appropriate words in which to tell your tale. I have heard it already—and several details which I fancy you would not have thought it necessary to communicate to me into the bargain. What possessed you to choose that room of all others in the house to make a declaration in? I remember that, when I was a boy, I used often to creep to the end of the corridor in hopes of seeing some exciting episode take place beneath me; but nothing ever came of it. Mrs. Winnington has had better luck."

"Mrs. Winnington? Good Lord! She wasn't there when—when—"

"She was, though—didn't miss a word of it. And now that I begin to realise what the scene must have been, I can't help wishing that I too could have been concealed somewhere and watched her face," said Mr. Brune, bursting into a hearty laugh.

"Oh, it's all very well to laugh," remonstrated Walter; "but this is serious."

"The whole thing is undoubtedly serious," answered Mr. Brune, recovering his gravity. "At the same time, I don't know that the way in which Mrs. Winnington and I have come to a knowledge of it is not as good a one as another. It has saved a world of gradual explanations."

"Is she awfully angry?"

"Well, yes; she is rather angry, I believe; but that should hardly surprise you."

"Poor Edith!" muttered Walter; "how she will catch it! I have a sort of feeling that I ought to go back to the house at once."

"I have a sort of feeling that you will do no such thing, so long as I can hold you," returned Mr. Brune, keeping a firm grip of his son's arm. "My dear boy, you must allow parents and children to settle their differences between themselves. And, talking of that, doesn't it strike you that I may have a word or two to say to your marriage—or rather engagement?"

"Oh, of course. In fact, I was just going to tell you all about it. I know," continued Walter penitently, "that I have no business to think about marrying at all; but—but, in short, I couldn't help it."

"You have done what can't be helped now, at all events," observed Mr. Brune. "I don't blame you," he resumed, after a pause. "A son who has never troubled his father in any worse way than by falling in love with a girl who hasn't a sixpence, and who has an outrageous old mother, must be allowed to be a success, as sons go, and can fairly claim some indulgence. But, setting that consideration aside, it is a very open question whether I have any right at all to interfere with your plans, except as a friendly adviser. When you were a boy, you know, I used to make

you obey me, and never allowed you to ask questions or begin your sentences with a But."

Walter nodded. "It's the only way," he said.

"It is gratifying to me to have your approval," said Mr. Brune gravely. "Well, so long as it was necessary that I should be master, I believe I was a tolerably strict one; but a time always arrives when the old bird's functions come to an end, and the young ones must fly for themselves and shift for themselves. There isn't room for you in the old nest, and you must feather a new one as best you can. Or again, if you prefer a nest without feathers, what can I say? I can give you the benefit of my experience as to the comfort of nests of that description; but it isn't much use for me to scold."

"Bless you! you couldn't scold if you were to try for a twelvemonth," said Walter, giving his father's arm a squeeze; "you don't know the way."

"Anyhow, I am not going to scold. Nor am I going to remonstrate. Indeed, if there came to be a question of remonstrances between us, I am half afraid that it would be for me to receive, not to utter, them. I have not done my duty by you, Walter; though I believe I may say that I have intended to do it—if that is any excuse."

"My dear old man, what are you talking about? You have been the kindest father and the best friend any fellow could wish for," cried Walter warmly.

"Ah, well! You have a case against me, all the same. Things have not fallen out quite as they seemed likely to do when your mother and I agreed that you were to succeed me at the farm, instead of entering a profession like your brothers. To a certain extent I have been unfortunate; that is to say that I have neither made nor inherited what I expected to do; but, on the other hand, I have muddled away a lot of money. The upshot of it all is that, instead of being very comfortably off, I am a poor man and shall never be anything else. I hear people talk of making farming pay; but I can't say I have ever yet met a man who has accomplished the feat."

"I defy any man to make farming pay in these days," said Walter confidently.

"Well; but don't you see what this brings us to? The only thing that could enable you to support a wife and family would be my death; and goodness only knows how long I may not live. I am as strong as a horse and barely past the half-century."

"I only wish you may live another fifty years."

"Thank you very much; but fifty years is rather a long period to propose to a young lady for an engagement. How are you going to get out of that difficulty?"

Walter scratched his head, and answered with much candour that he was hanged if he knew.

Then Mr. Brune pulled a letter out of his pocket. "The afternoon post brought me this," he said, "and I was going to show it to you before

I heard anything about your love affairs. It is from William Boulger—your uncle William, whom you have heard of, but never seen, and who is now senior partner in the firm of Boulger & Co.—and he writes to offer an opening in the bank to one of my sons. He means one of the younger ones, no doubt, and I suppose the fact of the matter is that he has been quarrelling with his own people. A few years ago I should have said No, thank you ; but now things look so bad that I thought I ought at least to let you hear of the proposal before declining it. As far as I understand him, it is only a clerkship that he offers; but he alludes to ‘probable advancement in life,’ which, I conclude, means eventual partnership. Now William Boulger is, or used to be, an infernally disagreeable fellow ; but he is a man of business and a man of his word, and the chances are that, if anything, he means more than he says, rather than less. I think the matter might be worth your considering.”

“ My dear father,” exclaimed Walter, “ it is the very thing. What a stroke of luck ! Write off to the old boy, and tell him I’m his man. I don’t mind confessing to you now that I *was* a little bit down about my prospects ; but this will put everything right, depend upon it.”

Even in that uncertain light Walter could see that his father was looking at him in an odd, wistful way.

“ What is it ? ” he asked. “ You think I shan’t like the sort of work, eh ? ”

“ My poor fellow, I don’t think about it ; I know you will utterly hate and abhor it. You, who love the open air and the smell of the fields almost as much as I do, and outdoor sports a great deal more than I ever did—you to sit upon a high stool in the city, totting up figures from morning to night ! Even the prospect of your dying a rich man could never reconcile me to such a notion.”

“ I should be doing it with an object,” said Walter quickly.

“ Well, yes ; there’s that. And you can always throw it up, and return to your crust of bread and liberty. I want you to promise me, my boy, that you will do that, if you find the life intolerable. But I think, upon the whole, you would do wisely to accept the offer. You would be none the worse off for having given the thing a trial, and living in London will give you an insight into the ways of the world which you could never have acquired if you had vegetated down at Broom Leas all the days of your life. Only pray bear in mind that you will always have it in your power to escape.”

“ And Edith ? ” said Walter, smiling.

“ Ah—that indeed ! ”

Mr. Brune did not choose to tell his son how very little belief he had in the successful termination of that affair ; still less was he disposed to try and convince the young fellow that this world only exists by virtue of continual change, that when the course of true love does not run smooth it very commonly ceases to run at all, and that nobody is much the worse after a year or two. There are things that one does not say

to women and children ; and there are also things—this, at least, was Mr. Brune's view—that ought not to be said to young men. Innocence is sacred ; and should not the illusions and enthusiasms of youth be sacred too ?

Quand j'ai connu la vérité,
J'ai cru que c'était une amie ;
Quand je l'ai comprise et sentie,
J'en étais déjà dégoûté.

Et pourtant elle est éternelle,
Et ceux qui se sont passés d'elle
Ici-bas ont tout ignoré.

As a man grows older he inevitably learns much respecting his own nature and that of his fellow-mortals which can hardly heighten his respect for the race ; and probably few would care to surrender that sad knowledge ; but who, on looking back, would wish that he had known at the age of twenty-three all that he knows now ?

Mr. Brune, then, held his peace ; and as for Walter, he spent the remainder of the evening in golden dreams, towards the realisation of which the obnoxious high stool was to act as a stepping-stone. The evening—if he had been in a frame of mind to pay attention to trifles—was not being passed in a very cheerful manner by the trio who sat round the fire near him ; for Mr. Brune was silent and thoughtful, and Nellie, for some unexplained reason, thought fit to demean herself towards Mr. Stanniforth in such an exceedingly cold and haughty fashion that she succeeded at length in driving that good-natured and mystified gentleman clean out of the room to seek solace in tobacco. Walter may be pardoned for having failed to notice this by-play. He went up to bed in an exuberantly hopeful mood, and dreamt that he was senior partner in Boulger's bank, that he had just purchased back the estate of his forefathers, and that he was consulting Edith as to whether, when he got his peerage, he should call himself Lord Brune or Lord Longbourne.

The next morning, while he was smoking his pipe in the stable-yard after breakfast, a groom from Longbourne rode up, and delivered to him a note addressed in feminine handwriting, which brought his foolish heart up into his mouth.

“ I was to wait for an answer, if you please, sir,” said the man.

Walter moved away a few paces and tore open his letter, which did not prove to be from Edith, as he had half hoped that it might be ; nor were its contents of a nature to raise an anxious lover's spirits. “ Mrs. Winnington presents her compliments to Mr. Walter Brune, and would be glad to see him for a few minutes, if he will be so good as to call upon her between eleven and twelve o'clock this morning.”

Walter faced about, and walked back to the groom. “ Say, Mr. Walter Brune's compliments, and he'll turn up all right.”

And shortly after having despatched this informal reply, our young friend set out in obedience to Mrs. Winnington's summons. He was

not much alarmed, but rather amused, at the absurdity of her writing to him in the third person. It seemed to him that she could not have felt her position to be an impregnable one when she threw up that flimsy species of earthwork. The fact was that he had been so accustomed to hearing Mrs. Winnington laughed at and made a fool of by Marescalchi that he hardly did justice to the good lady's inexorable will and strength of purpose, and had got a sadly mistaken notion into his head that, if he were only firm with her, she would falter and give way.

Yet, for all his stout-heartedness, he felt his hands growing cold and a sinking sensation about the region of the waistcoat as he drew nearer to the house. He had an uncomfortable suspicion that the butler, who admitted him, knew all; and when he was ushered into the same small room in which his father had been engaged with the enemy on the previous evening, he knew that he was looking defiant, and by no means wore that aspect of calm and courteous determination which he would fain have assumed.

Mrs. Winnington was sitting by the fire, reading the *Times*, and at a short distance off, Edith, with her back turned, was gazing intently out of the window at a large spruce-fir, the lower branches of which darkened the room. Walter had a moment of hesitation, not having been prepared to meet Edith, and being in some uncertainty as to the manner in which he ought to greet her. He got out of the difficulty by not greeting her at all—a course which she made the easier for him by never turning her head nor manifesting the slightest consciousness of his presence.

Mrs. Winnington rose with much majesty to her full height, and Walter, to show that he was not frightened, held out his hand, saying cheerfully, "Good morning."

But both the lady's hands were engaged in holding her newspaper, over which she bowed in a stately fashion, without speaking. Walter remained standing before her, thinking that he would allow her to fire the first shot; but as she chose to maintain a frigid silence, he presently took upon himself to open the proceedings by plunging *in medias res* with—

"I'm afraid you're not best pleased with me, Mrs. Winnington."

"Will you sit down?" she said, not deigning to notice his observation; and the young man took the chair pointed out to him, and sat with his elbows on his knees, twirling his hat, and wishing, perhaps, that the next quarter of an hour were well over.

"I need scarcely tell you," began Mrs. Winnington, "that it is not very pleasant to me to receive you, after what has occurred; but I have sent for you because it seemed to me desirable that our respective positions should be—er——"

"That we should know where we are, in short," suggested Walter, by way of helping her out in a friendly spirit.

Mrs. Winnington gave him one glance of mingled disgust and disdain,

but did not refuse to accept the interpolation. "You will probably agree with me," she went on, "that what has to be said had better be said in the fewest possible words. I shall purposely abstain from any comment upon your behaviour—"

"I should like you just to admit, though, that I have done the straight thing as far as you are concerned," interrupted Walter. "You are displeased and disappointed, and I'm sure I don't wonder at it; but when you speak of my behaviour, I think you ought to allow that I have not been guilty of any deception."

"Not guilty of any deception!" cried Mrs. Winnington, reddening. "Well, I can only say that I think you have behaved as deceitfully and dishonourably as—" Here, however, she came to a full stop. She was aware that she could not lose her temper without at the same time losing something of her dignity, and the occasion was one upon which dignity must be allowed to have the pre-eminence. "But that is not the question," she said, waving the subject away with a lofty sweep of the *Times*.

"Pardon me, but to my mind it is very much the question."

"Not the question," repeated Mrs. Winnington with increased emphasis. "It was not to put you upon your defence, or to listen to it, that I requested you to call here this morning. I am willing to take the most charitable view of the case, and to assume that you have, or think you have, a real attachment for my daughter." Mrs. Winnington brought out these last words with rather a wry face; but she had considered beforehand what she should say, and was resolute not to swerve from her line of attack. "And if that be so," she continued, "you will certainly not wish to cause her any needless pain or distress. It surely cannot be necessary that I should even mention such a thing as the possibility of your becoming engaged to her; your common sense will tell you that no father or mother could sanction an engagement where there were neither means nor prospect of any on one side or the other. The whole thing is a foolish boy-and-girl scrape which I am sure we should all be glad to forget. Edith has expressed to me her sincere regret and penitence" (here Walter started, and glanced at the figure by the window, which, he fancied, shivered ever so slightly), "and—in fact it is a case of least said soonest mended. Fortunately very few people know of the affair. Your father has been told of it, and for several reasons I thought it best also to tell my daughter Margaret, who is very anxious that there should be no breach between us and your father's family in consequence; but it need never, I should hope, go further. I cannot truly say that we shall be glad to see you often after this, and probably your own good feeling will prompt you to keep out of the way; but occasional chance meetings between you and Edith can hardly be prevented, and I wish you to give me your honour in her presence that you will never, by word or look, recur to—to what is past."

Walter was a good deal disconcerted. For anger and abuse he had been prepared, but not for the tone of studious moderation which Mrs.

Winnington had seen fit to adopt, and remembering that, not so many hours before, he had called her an awful old woman in her hearing, and had kissed her daughter under her very nose, he could not but feel that her self-restraint placed him at a considerable disadvantage. He was conscious, too, that, according to all received ideas, her case was a strong one, and his own a deplorably weak one.

"I'm not much of a hand at argument," he confessed at length, "and I can't put things as forcibly as you do, Mrs. Winnington. All the same I have something to say for myself, and I dare say I shall manage to get it said, if you'll give me time. As to my having no money, I'm afraid that's undeniable; and yesterday I couldn't have pretended that I had anything in the way of prospects to look forward to either; but, oddly enough, there has been a little change since then. My uncle—old Boulger, you know—has offered me a clerkship in his bank, and I've made up my mind to take it. I admit that that doesn't mean much pay for some years; but I believe he means to push me on, if I'm good, and I think I may fairly say that I have a chance of being comfortably off some day. I suppose I shall go up to London almost immediately, and never get away, except on Bank holidays, so there won't be much risk of those chance meetings that you mentioned."

Mrs. Winnington could not repress a faint murmur of satisfaction.

"All this is awfully vague, I know," Walter continued, "and perhaps I ought not to expect you to sanction a regular engagement, but—" Here a short laugh from Mrs. Winnington arrested him, and he looked up inquiringly.

"Oh, go on, pray go on," said she; "it is quite diverting to listen to you. You would prefer an irregular engagement, I suppose."

"What I was going to say was this: I must acknowledge that, under the circumstances, you have every right to send me about my business, but, for all that, I can't give Edith up at your bidding."

"Really," said Mrs. Winnington, "I do not understand you."

"Well, then, I must try to speak more plainly. I love Edith, and I know that she loves me; and, so long as that is so, I shall consider that we are bound to one another, though we may not be formally engaged. To tell you the truth, Mrs. Winnington, I have my doubts about her ever having expressed repentance to you in the way that you say she did. She may have told you that she was sorry for having vexed you, or that you should have overheard something of what passed between us yesterday; but that she ever said more than that is what I cannot believe."

"You are very insolent," returned Mrs. Winnington coldly; "but I suppose I must bear with you up to the end. Edith, my love, I wish I could avoid paining you; but I am afraid you will have to tell this—very extraordinary young gentleman that you wish to recall any foolish promise that he may have extorted from you."

Upon this Edith at last turned round, and Walter eagerly scanned her features. She was very pale; but she had not been crying, as her lover half hoped, half feared that she might have been, and when she spoke, it was in a steady, monotonous voice. She did not, however, once raise her eyes from the carpet.

"We must part, Walter," she said: "we have made a mistake. You know," she added presently, "I always told you that it was impossible—that it could not be."

"It can be, and it will be," cried Walter, who had now also turned rather white, "if we only have the pluck to be true to ourselves and to one another. It is not of your own free will that you are turning me off like this. Edith, look at me!—listen! I don't ask you to bind yourself formally; I don't even ask to see you, or to be allowed to write to you. I only entreat you to have patience and to wait. That sounds like asking a great deal; but if you really love me, it is asking nothing. I won't give up hope until I hear from your own lips that you don't care enough for me to bear a time of uncertainty and waiting."

"Edith!" said Mrs. Winnington solemnly.

The girl looked up, cast an imploring glance first at her mother and then at Walter, and dropped her eyes again, but said never a word.

"Edith!" repeated the instrument of destiny by the fireplace, in somewhat sterner accents.

This time the victim responded to the call. "It is quite true," she said slowly, "I don't care enough—" Her voice died away. Then, all of a sudden, she exclaimed passionately, "Oh, why can't you believe what I say? Why don't you go away? You ought not to persecute me so!"

"I hope," said Mrs. Winnington quietly, "that you are now satisfied."

Poor Walter was not in a state to make any reply. The floor seemed to be rising and falling before him; the walls were spinning round; he had to clutch at the mantel-piece for support. There was a long minute of profound silence, after which he heard Mrs. Winnington's voice, as from the far distance, saying, "Don't you think you had better leave us now?"

He made a strong effort to recover his self-command. "Certainly," he answered. "I have nothing more to do here. It—it's a pity this wasn't said a little sooner. I had no intention of—persecuting anybody. Good-bye, Mrs. Winnington. Good-bye, Edith, and God bless you always!"

And so, somehow or other, he found himself out in the hall, and was aware that the butler was surveying him with an air of grave surprise.

"Good-bye, Wilson," he said; "you won't see me down here again for many a long day, I expect. I'm going up to London to make my fortune, Wilson."

"Indeed, sir? I am sorry to hear it, sir," answered the man.

"What, sorry to hear that I am going to make my fortune? You must know precious little of the world then, Wilson. Why, bless your soul, money is the only thing worth living for. There's nothing that money can't buy—houses, and lands, and friends, and wives, too, if you want them. Between you and me, Wilson, this world's going to the devil pretty quickly."

Probably Wilson knew perfectly well what was the matter; otherwise he might have been inclined to suspect that young Mr. Brune had been drinking a little more than was good for him. And indeed Walter's gait, as he hastened across the lawn, was scarcely that of a sober man.

Before he had reached the boundary of the garden some one appeared suddenly from a by-path, and caught him by both hands.

"Oh, Walter!" exclaimed Margaret, with the tears in her eyes, "I am so very, very sorry."

Possibly there may have been something like tears in the young fellow's eyes, too; for he winked violently, and cleared his voice several times, without being able to make any articulate reply.

"I know that I have been a great deal to blame for this," Margaret went on penitently. "I ought to have foreseen what was likely to happen; but somehow I never thought of it until—until a short time ago."

Walter now managed to say that he had nothing to complain of, and blamed nobody. He had made a great mistake, and there was no more to be said.

Certainly there was not much to be said in the way of consolation. Had Walter declared himself determined to hope on against hope, Mrs. Stanniforth would have been ready to point out to him how wrong this was, and might even have been persuaded in the long run to write to him, every now and then, and let him have news of the beloved one's state of health—a point upon which he might reasonably be supposed to feel some anxiety; but as he chose to give up the game, it was not for her to quarrel with his submissiveness, and no doubt, matters being as they were, it was a good thing that he was about to vanish altogether from the scene. Margaret may have been inwardly a trifle disappointed; but she did not allow the existence of any such feeling to be inferred from her manner, and Walter gave her no time to add much more, one way or the other. He made her a somewhat incoherent speech, thanking her for all her kindness to him in past years, and hoping that she would not forget him, and so departed.

Margaret watched him out of sight, and then returned to the house, where her mother met her with—

"All's well that ends well. But, Margaret dear, I can't help saying that I hope this will be a warning to you to be just a little more careful about making all sorts of people welcome to the house. If anything of

this kind were to occur again, I am afraid it would be my duty to think seriously of settling down with dear Edith in a home of our own."

CHAPTER XVII.

NELLIE SPENDS AN EXCITING DAY.

It is so common a failing, even among the wisest of mankind, to estimate what is probable by the measure of what is desirable, that Mrs. Winnington may be excused for having cherished a fond belief that all cognisance of the episode treated of in the last chapter might be confined to the five persons whom she knew to be already acquainted with it. No one, however, who has lived much in the country will suppose for one moment that a popular and widely-known young fellow like Walter Brune could leave the neighbourhood abruptly in order to seek employment in London, for which, both by tastes and training, he was notoriously unfitted—no one, I say, will believe that such a step as this could be taken without reasons, true and false, being speedily forthcoming to account for it. In this instance, the truth, or something not very unlike the truth, was known to the whole county in about a week;—in a space of time, that is to say, which would include one Sunday, one market-day, and at least one dinner-party, or other social gathering. Mr. Wilson, it may be assumed, would give his version of the affair to one set of persons, Mrs. Winnington's maid would communicate hers to another, while the groom who had ridden over to Broom Leas with the note for Walter would command the attention of a third. Starting from these humble sources, the news would infiltrate by the usual processes into a higher layer of society, and propagating itself by the mere fact of its existence, as the germs of certain diseases are said to do, would ere long penetrate into the most remote and least inquisitive quarters.

Thus it was that, within the brief period above indicated, a very general impression got abroad to the effect that poor young Brune had been abominably treated. His father, it was alleged, had turned him out of doors; Mrs. Stanniforth had forbidden him ever to show his face at Longbourne again; Mrs. Winnington had assailed him with a torrent of the coarsest abuse; and all this because, forsooth, he had ventured to raise his eyes to a girl who, after all, was in no way his superior, and who surely might have been contented with throwing him over when he had served her purpose of acting as a decoy-duck for more wary and wealthier suitors. It was unanimously concluded that the affair was discreditable to all concerned in it; and, as this is always a comfortable conclusion to arrive at, Walter's wrongs were discussed for a longer time and with greater relish than anybody's good fortune would have been.

It was well for Mrs. Winnington that she was both disliked and feared in the county, and that she had no friend within twenty miles

sufficiently intimate to undertake the delightful task of letting her know what pleasant things were being said about her. She was perfectly at ease in her mind, feeling assured that those in whom she had confided would best consult their own interest by keeping silence; and what better security for discretion could she have than that? Mr. Brune, if she had known it, had taken upon himself to let a sixth person into the secret; but that person was a safe one, and moreover could hardly have been kept long in ignorance of what had taken place.

Nellie showed no surprise when her father related the circumstances to her, but expressed herself upon the subject with a bitterness which rather astonished him, declaring that Walter was well out of it, and passing a sweeping condemnation upon the entire Longbourne set, Stanniforths and Winningtons alike.

"How horrid they all are!" she exclaimed; "Edith is not a bit better than the rest of them. Even Mrs. Stanniforth, good and kind as she is, is completely under the thumb of that detestable woman, and did not dare to say a word for poor Walter, whom they have driven into a choky London den, where he will pine, like a lark in a cage."

"Walter had made his choice on that score before he knew that he was to be rejected," observed Mr. Brune; "and you must learn to moderate your language, Nell, or people will set you down as a little termagant. I give you over Mrs. Winnington; but you needn't curse the whole tribe of Stanniforths. There's Tom, for instance; I call Tom a capital fellow."

"Do you?"

"Yes; don't you? I thought you and he had struck up a firm alliance when he was here."

"Oh!" said Nellie, "I liked him well enough in a sort of way; but I have no doubt that, below the surface, he is just like the others. And then he is such a bore with his philanthropic schemes."

"H'm! I may be very wrong; but I was under the impression that it was you who persuaded me, against my better judgment, to sign a petition for the total abolition of vivisection."

"Well, I know I did. When people have hobbies, the only way to save oneself from being tormented is to give in to them; and I told you at the time that it didn't the least signify, because nobody would think of looking at all those signatures."

"Yes, I remember that you made use of that remarkable argument. Poor Stanniforth! he won't worry you with any more hobbies; for I don't suppose we are likely to come across him again, unless, indeed, he pays them another visit at Longbourne. Do you know, I have sometimes thought that our worthy friend Mrs. Winnington would not be altogether displeased if he were to take a fancy to Edith."

Nellie burst out laughing with much apparent heartiness. "You dear, simple old father! Do you mean to say that you have only just found that out? Didn't you guess why Mrs. Winnington was so

desperately anxious to keep things quiet that she didn't even forbid Walter the house, and has had us twice asked to dinner since Mr. Stanniforth has been there? I was so glad that we could not go! I don't think I could have borne to walk in the old wretch's triumphal procession, like the captives of the Roman generals. Why, Edith is either engaged to Mr. Stanniforth now, or will be in a few days."

This conversation took place towards the end of September, at which time Mr. Stanniforth certainly had not compromised his future in the manner imputed to him. He had spent a week at Longbourne, and had then left with a precipitancy which did not lack significance. But of Mr. Stanniforth and his deeds and fortunes, Nellie had neither seen nor heard anything from the day on which he had quitted Broom Leas. During the last few days of his stay she had been pleased, as we have seen, to treat him with a haughtiness, not to say incivility, for which her conscience now began to call her to account. Looking back upon this dispassionately, it did seem somewhat unjust, and perhaps even unworthy, to have vented her temper upon the poor man because Mrs. Winnington had suggested impertinent possibilities with reference to him; but Miss Brune was not more prone than are the majority of her age and sex to look at things dispassionately, nor had she anticipated that her guest would take this snubbing in the manner that he had done. If it had been in her power to look down into the depths of her heart, she would have made a discovery which would have surprised her; for she would have found out that what she wanted was that Mr. Stanniforth should inquire into the cause of her changed demeanour, and, without receiving any answer—for of course he could not receive any—should by some means or other have arrived at a comprehension of it. But he had done nothing of that kind. He had asked no questions, nor had he once taken the trouble to call at Broom Leas after his change of quarters. He had simply (so it seemed to Nellie) shrugged his shoulders, and walked off, as a sensible man might be expected to do when out of patience with the caprices of a silly schoolgirl. Now it was by no means in this latter light that Miss Brune desired to be regarded by Mr. Stanniforth or anybody else: hence, possibly, the acrimony with which she had spoken of him behind his back.

During the succeeding six weeks Nellie had leisure enough and to spare for the duty of self-examination; but as this method of passing time is seldom satisfactory to young and healthy minds, she soon discarded it, and began to cast about her for occupation or amusement in one form or another. Of these two good things there was now, as it happened, an unwonted dearth in her small world. Out of all her tribe of brothers not one was at this time beneath the paternal roof, some being at school, some at sea; even Walter was away in London, where Philip also was hard at work, studying law after the fashion known to the reader. Mrs. Winnington, in search of second and third strings to her bow, had carried off Edith into the west of England. The neigh-

bourhood, too, which at the best of times was not a remarkably lively one, had entered upon the annual period of torpor which separated the last of the garden parties from the first of the winter dances.

All this tended to produce a feeling of melancholy which the season of the year was well calculated to deepen. The leaden skies, the bare, brown fields, the yellow leaves that fluttered down in showers with every gust of wind, the chrysanthemums and dahlias all draggled and forlorn—these were dismal objects to contemplate when one had little else to do, the livelong day, but to contemplate them. Every morning the low mists hung over the Cray valley, and every afternoon they crept slowly up to the higher ground, wrapping men and things in a moist and chilly embrace. Mr. Brune caught a bad cold in his head, and became a trifle querulous under the influence of it, declaring that this being out in all weathers would be the death of him, and that he missed Walter more every day.

"I shouldn't catch colds in my head if I were not in such confoundedly low spirits," he asserted; "and I shouldn't be in low spirits if I had somebody to talk to."

Upon this Nellie eagerly suggested that she should accompany her father on his daily rounds; but he negatived the proposition despondently.

"You can't walk," he said, "and there's nothing for you to ride."

"There's Wasp," said she.

Now Wasp was a powerful young horse which Walter had bought, some months before, with the intention of hunting him during the ensuing season. Nellie had been once upon his back; but he had given her so much trouble on that occasion that she had been forbidden to repeat the experiment.

"I won't have you riding Wasp," said Mr. Brune; "he is too much for you."

"I should like to see the horse that was too much for me!" cried Miss Brune; and in truth she had a light hand and a firm seat, and had often been complimented upon her possession of these gifts.

"Very well, my dear, then you can look at Wasp as often as you please. I can't afford to have my children breaking their arms and legs in these hard times."

Nellie said no more; for she understood how to manage her father. And the remainder of this chapter will be devoted, amongst other things, to showing how wrong it is of children to manage their parents, and how foolish of parents to let themselves be managed by their children.

On the following morning the wilful young woman whose discomfiture will presently be related, privately ordered a side-saddle to be put upon Wasp; and when Mr. Brune went into the stable-yard after breakfast to mount his own steady cob, lo and behold! there was a diminutive person in a riding-habit, perched upon a sidling grey quadruped of gigantic size, waiting for him; and he was immediately greeted with a triumphant

"There now ! didn't I tell you so ? You see he's as quiet as a lamb."

Mr. Brune remarked that he was evidently getting into his dotage, and that the sooner he was dead and buried out of sight the better, since nobody any longer dreamt of paying attention to his express orders. He then sarcastically inquired whether a leading-rein had been provided for him ; whereat the stable-helper, who was a young man of no manners or refinement, burst into a prodigious haw-haw, and had to be sternly rebuked by the coachman. Mr. Brune, meanwhile, had climbed a little stiffly into his saddle, and, after a few preliminary plunges on the part of Nellie's gallant grey, the pair rode off side by side, the old coachman hobbling out to watch them with a countenance expressive of admiration not unmixed with anxiety.

"Hope they won't meet any o' them blamed traction-engines," he muttered. "That there Wops he ain't the oss for a nervous rider, let alone a young lady."

Wasp was certainly not a pleasant animal to ride. His notion of getting over the ground was a series of senseless and objectless shies ; and his notion of shying was a tremendous spring from one side of the road to the other, followed by sundry snorts and capers, which seemed intended to signify to his rider that nothing except a strong sense of duty restrained him from making a bolt for it. Nellie, however, rather enjoyed, or said that she enjoyed, these light-hearted performances, and would not hear of going back and having the saddles changed, as her father humbly requested her to do. So they pottered about from field to field the whole morning, and had a gallop over a corner of the downs ; after which the exuberance of Wasp's spirits subsided a little ; insomuch that Mr. Brune was brought to confess that there didn't appear to be much harm in the brute after all. His confidence was at length so fully restored that, when they reached the bailiff's cottage, he was persuaded to dismount and look over some accounts which had been prepared for his perusal, leaving his daughter to wait outside.

Now waiting was what neither Nellie nor Wasp liked ; and at the end of ten minutes one of them reached the limits of her stock of patience. She tapped on the window with her whip, and asked whether she might ride just a little way on the downs to keep herself warm, and come back again. Mr. Brune called out hastily, "No, no ; stay where you are. I'll be with you directly." But perhaps his daughter did not hear him ; for she quietly turned her horse's head away, and was soon cantering up the grassy slopes of a hill famed in those parts as offering a point of view whence the usual incredible number of counties can be distinguished on a clear day. She reined up her horse when she reached the crest, from which only one county, and not very much of that, was then visible ; but if there was little in the way of scenery to attract the notice of the solitary horsewoman, she was rewarded, before many minutes were past, by the sight of something that caused her to jump, and cry "Oh !"

in accents of suppressed excitement which no landscape, however extensive, would have drawn from her.

Far away, beyond the misty valley at her feet, a small reddish-brown object suddenly flitted across the opposite hill-side, and was gone; and almost before the above ejaculation was uttered, there were the hounds, streaming after the fox, and presently a few red coats appeared in the wake of the hounds.

"Oh," exclaimed Nellie, "*how* I should like to be with them!"

An instant later she would gladly have recalled a wish which had been only too fully shared by another spectator of the scene. Wasp, whose cocked ears and trembling limbs had escaped the attention of his heedless rider, not only wished, but meant to be with them, and, in order to give the promptest effect to his intentions, he was tearing down the slope at a speed which showed little consideration for his own safety or that of his mistress. Nellie did not like it at all. She might as well have tried to stop an avalanche as to pull up a runaway horse in such a place as that; but she tugged as hard as she could, just by way of letting him know that she was there, and, finding that her efforts produced no effect whatever, made the best of what could not be helped, sat well back, and wished for the end. Even in that moment of dire distress, she found a grain of comfort in the reflection that she was in no danger of heading the fox. Thundering down a declivity almost as steep as the proverbial side of a house, with the ground flying from under her like running water, an aspiration flashed across her mind akin to that in which the unfortunate bricklayer is said to have found time to indulge between the top of a Parisian scaffolding and the pavement of the street below—*"Oh, mon Dieu ! pourvu que ça dure!"* "If nothing happens between this and that!" she thought. By "that" she meant the slope on the further side of the valley, where, supposing that she ever got there, she felt tolerably sure of being able to check her headlong career.

But, alas! Wasp had thought of that too; or, if he had not thought of it, instinct told him to head down the valley, and to round the base of the hill behind which the red coats had vanished. Somehow or other, he and his helpless load reached level ground; somehow or other—Nellie never knew how—they traversed a road, a ditch, and a small brook; and now they were racing across a stretch of open country, and were gaining upon the last of the horsemen. But, owing to some inequalities in the ground, only the heads and shoulders of these were visible, and in a minute or two the tops of their hats had disappeared. It was then that Nellie became aware of a new peril, and a more formidable one than any of those from which she had escaped. Directly before her was a ragged black hedgerow which looked both high and thick; and since nothing but a glimmer of grey sky could be discerned through it, it seemed evident that there must be a drop of unknown depth on the other side. Nellie took this in at a glance, and at the same moment a sickening suspicion of wire crossed her mind. Although this was her

first experience of following the hounds (for Mr. Brune had old-fashioned prejudices with reference to the appearance of ladies in the hunting-field) she had often ridden across country with her brothers, and was not afraid of any obstacle of moderate size; but she knew that she had never been over such a big thing as this in her life; and, what was worse, she very much doubted whether Wasp ever had either. The brute was rushing blindly ahead; she made a despairing and fruitless attempt to steady him; then she shut her eyes. Immediately came a crash; a sensation as if the whole world was breaking up into fragments, a brilliant display of fireworks—and the next thing of which Miss Brune was fully conscious was that she was sitting in a ploughed field, with her hair hanging over her face, and the hills and sky revolving in a most extraordinary manner round her.

After wondering for a moment whether she was dead or alive, and satisfying herself that her head was still upon her shoulders, she raised herself on to her knees; and perhaps some people would have profited by that position to return thanks for deliverance from sudden death. Nellie, however, must have inherited the instincts of a sportswoman; for the first thing that suggested itself to her mind was not this obvious duty, but the expediency of catching her horse, whom she saw at the other end of the field, trotting round with his head in the air, and in a state of bewilderment evidently quite equal to her own. Some people, again, would have been very willing to let that headstrong beast go his own way, and would not have cared to give him a second chance of breaking a Christian neck; but this was by no means Nellie's view of the case. She knew that Wasp would have had quite enough of running away for one day, and that, if by any means she could contrive to hoist herself upon his back, he would let himself be ridden home as submissively as could be wished.

To catch a loose horse is, however, one of those things which are more easily determined upon than carried into execution, and the difficulty is not lessened when the pursuer happens to be in a somewhat unsteady condition as to head and legs, and to be further encumbered with a torn riding-habit. Nellie plunged across the furrows as best she could, and when she got near her horse, called him by name; whereupon he cocked his ears, neighed, and waited for her to approach. He then flung up his head, and went off at a gallop. Nellie now proceeded to stalk him patiently and warily into a corner, he lending himself to the design and watching her movements with much apparent interest. When she was within a few yards of him, up went his head again, and away he cantered into another corner, whither she laboriously followed him. This manœuvre was repeated for the space of half an hour; at the end of which time Miss Brune's patience and strength alike gave way, and she felt very much disposed to sit down in the dirt and cry. Wasp, too, had seemingly become tired of the game. There was a gap in the hedge at the further end of the field which a less stupid animal would have taken advantage of long before. He now scrambled through it,

and was promptly lost to sight. The thunder of his retreating hoofs was heard for a few minutes; and then there was complete silence and solitude.

"What *am I to do!*" exclaimed Nellie, half laughing, half crying. Her hat was a shapeless ruin, her habit was in rags, her face was bleeding from the scratches of the briery hedge, she was covered with mud from head to foot, and she was a good five miles from home. As to what she was to do, that was a question which demanded no long consideration, there being only one thing to be done: she must make her way home on foot. But, although Miss Brune soon realised this necessity, she was not at all so sure that her strength was equal to the task that lay before her. She began to feel the effects of her fall in aching limbs and a swimming head, and the exercise which she had taken in the last half-hour had reduced her to something very like complete exhaustion. However, she stumbled out of the ploughed field, crossed a pasture, and ere long struck a faintly-marked track which she knew would lead her across the downs to Broom Leas.

The experienced novel-reader will perceive that the moment has now arrived for the introduction upon the scene of the *deus ex machina*; and sure enough before Nellie had plodded a quarter of a mile between the cart-ruts that marked her path, he duly made his appearance in the form of one whom she had supposed to be many miles away at that time. In her sorry plight, dignity and conventionality were burdens too petty to be remembered: accordingly, when the equestrian who was approaching her at a foot's pace pulled up, and exclaimed, in accents of stupefaction, "God bless my soul! is that Miss Brune?" she replied with unaffected warmth—

"Oh, Mr. Stanniforth, I am so delighted to see you! I began to think I should have to lie down and die in a ditch."

Mr. Stanniforth had at once dismounted, and was too busy inquiring into the nature of the accident that had befallen Miss Brune to give any explanation of his own presence. It was not until she had assured him at least a dozen times that she had received no hurt beyond a few scratches, and that all she at present desired was to find some means of reaching home before the spectacle of the riderless grey should have frightened her father out of his senses, that he consented to give an account of himself. He was staying at Longbourne, he said. He had come down quite suddenly, finding that he had a few days at his disposal; he had ridden out after luncheon, in hopes that he might fall in with the hounds, but had failed to do so, and was now very glad indeed that he had failed.

"I suppose Mrs. Wintringham and Edith have come back," observed Nellie, who had now had time to bethink herself of many things which the first sight of a friendly face had driven out of her remembrance, and whose manner had consequently become much more formal.

"No, they haven't," answered Tom, glancing at her quickly; "they

are—somewhere or other. Margaret told me where it was, but I'm sure I forget. Why should you suppose they had returned?"

"Oh, I don't know; I thought perhaps they might," answered Miss Brune with ostentatious carelessness. "I wish I could get home somehow; my father will certainly think I am killed. Can't you suggest something?"

"Well—unless you were to ride my horse. But you could hardly do that."

"No, hardly. There is a farmhouse about a mile further on which I could easily find my way to; and if they only knew at home that I was there, they could send for me. Couldn't you ride on and tell them?"

"Yes, I could do that, of course," answered Mr. Stanniforth slowly, and with evident reluctance. "But I don't think you ought to be left alone here."

"Why not?" inquired Nellie, turning an astonished pair of eyes upon him. "What harm could possibly happen to me? I should be so very much obliged if you would go on as quickly as you can; it would be so much the best way."

"If you tell me to go I must go; but I feel sure that your father would much prefer my seeing you into a place of safety. You really are not fit to walk without help, and if you will allow me to give you my arm——"

Nellie said she was perfectly well able to walk by herself, and required both her hands to hold up her habit.

"And besides," continued Tom, "my getting to Broom Leas a quarter of an hour sooner or later can make very little difference. Either your horse has gone straight back to his stables, in which case he is there by this time, or he has gone off in the other direction—which from your account seems more likely—and will probably be heard of next in Crayminster. Do let me take you as far as that farm, and I promise you that the moment I have handed you over to the farmer's wife, I will be off to Broom Leas like the wind."

Nellie did not give her consent to this arrangement; but, as she did not withhold it either, Mr. Stanniforth let well alone, and said no more. They walked on, side by side, in silence for some little time, and then he took up the conversation at the point where it had been broken off.

"Did you mean to say just now," he asked abruptly, "that it must have been in order to see the Winningtons that I had come here?"

"Really, I had not thought much about the matter. It wouldn't be very extraordinary if you had come here in order to see them, would it? I thought you liked them so much."

"So I do," he answered resolutely; "I think they are very nice people—especially Miss Winnington. But it wasn't to see them that I came here, all the same."

"Oh!"

"If you care to know why it was that I came——"

"Thanks; I don't care to know at all," interrupted Nellie hastily; for in an instant she had guessed what was coming, and she was determined to stop it, if she could. "Where have you been since you left these parts?"

Had she known Mr. Stanniforth as well as some of his colleagues in the House of Commons knew him, she would have been aware that to stop that excellent man when once he had made up his mind to deliver himself of a statement was to the full as hopeless a task as to pull up *Wasp* in mid-career.

"All right," he answered cheerfully; "then I'll tell you, though you don't care to hear. I should have to tell you sooner or later, and why not now as well as at any other time? I came here because I hoped to see you."

It was then that the impossibility of assuming a cold and majestic mien with a broken hat cocked rakishly over one eye, and a countenance disfigured by many scratches, made itself painfully manifest to Miss Brune.

"Well," she said, laughing nervously, "you have seen me now, and it is to be hoped that you are satisfied. I sincerely trust that no other stranger will see me for at least a week."

"But you don't call me a stranger, do you?" asked Tom reproachfully. And, getting no answer to this query, he continued, in a low and slightly hoarse voice, "Miss Brune, I am generally considered to be a tolerably ready speaker; but there are some things that a man feels too strongly about to be able to express in the best words; and I don't know how to say what I am going to say to you, though Heaven knows I have thought about it often enough." He paused for a moment. "There is a great deal that might be said about difference of age and—other things," he resumed, "but perhaps you will understand, without my mentioning it, that I fully feel the force of all that, and that I am not making use of any conventional form of words when I say that I know myself to be not nearly good enough for you. Only this I can say for myself, that I never loved any woman but you in my life, and never shall. It is rather odd for a man of my age to be able to make such an assertion; but I don't know, after all, why it should help me much. It all comes to much the same thing in the end. It's just a case of Yes or No."

Having put the case in this very explicit manner, Mr. Stanniforth stood still, and paused for a reply.

Now to be driven into a corner is what no woman likes; and Nellie considered that she had especial reason for resenting such treatment.

"If I had supposed for one moment that you were going to speak in this way," she said tremulously, "I should not have allowed you to walk with me. I don't think you ought to—to have taken advantage of——"

"But is it to be Yes or No?" persisted this somewhat peremptory wooer, too eager for his answer to notice the appeal made to his generosity. "Only tell me that, and I won't say another word."

"Oh, dear," exclaimed Nellie, bursting into a rather hysterical laugh, "how ridiculous this is! I wonder whether anybody in the world but you would ever have dreamt of choosing such a time as this to—mention such a subject. I can't think of anything at all, except of how dreadfully tired I am. Is that the farm over there? Oh, I hope it is."

"But, Miss Brune—Nellie—won't you just tell me whether it is to be No?"

"Very well, then," cried Nellie, stamping her foot in exasperation, "it is No—of course it is No! I didn't want to be disagreeable, but you will have it. It is No; I can't say anything more."

It was true enough that she could not say anything more. The agitations of the day had completely broken down her self-control at last, and, despite all her efforts, the tears had forced their way into her eyes. It was all that she could do to avoid disgracing herself by bursting into audible weeping.

But Tom Stanniforth, who was looking straight before him, did not see these signs of distress. Not another word did he speak until they had reached the farmhouse and he had delivered his charge into the hands of the farmer's wife. But just before he mounted his horse, he held out his hand to Nellie, and said—

"Good-bye, Miss Brune. I shan't bother you by letting you see me again till you have forgotten all this. I am sorry if I caused you any annoyance just now; and I know you are kind-hearted enough to be a little sorry for me too. It was quite true, what I told you about my never caring for anybody else. I hope you'll believe that, and that you'll forgive me if I have seemed a little presumptuous. I had to say it, you know."

Nellie nodded, being unable to find her voice; and so he rode off, and was soon out of sight.

Late that evening Mr. Brune, who had scoured the country far and wide in search of his daughter, and had thus been spared the shock of encountering Wasp, who had trotted quietly back to the stables, remarked that Tom Stanniforth really seemed to have behaved with great sense and consideration.

"I shall always like Tom," he said; "a true gentleman in every way, whatever you may say about his pedigree. I can't understand what you find to dislike in him."

"I don't dislike him," answered Nellie humbly; "I think he is very kind."

"But you look down upon him, Lord knows why! One gets odd ideas into one's head; I suppose it's a sign of old age creeping on," continued Mr. Brune musingly; "but I couldn't help thinking to-day

what a capital thing it would have been if you and he had taken to each other, and if he had married you instead of Edith. Don't make faces, my dear, I am only indulging in speculations ; and, dear me ! what a speculation that would have been, when you come to think of it ! I suppose Tom Stanniforth will be one of the richest men in England ; and, upon my word, I believe he will be one of the best husbands too. I don't grudge Mrs. Winnington her luck ; but it must be confessed that she does have luck."

Nellie made no answer, except to point out that it was long past bed-time.

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